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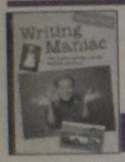

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56th year of publication

Government introduces tougher rules for immigration

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The Canadian government has stepped up efforts to fight terrorism, both abroad and in Canada, with changes designed to toughen up the Immigration Act.

In October, the House of Commons approved Bill C-11, which updates Canada's Immigration Act. Some of the changes address recent concerns about possible lack of safety measures at Canada's borders. According to the Immigration Canada website, "Bill C-11 strikes a balance between measures to address the security and safety of Canadians and Canada's borders on one hand, and our tradition of welcoming visitors and immigrants and protecting refugees on the other. Bill C-11 will allow us to say 'no' more quickly to those who would abuse our programs so that we can say 'yes' more often to the immigrants and refugees that Canada will need in the years to come."

Rene Mercier, a spokesperson for Immigration Minister Elinor Caplan's office, says the new provisions "would provide us with additional tools to remove people" — if necessary.

Some critics of Canada's immigration and refugee policies have called for harmonization with America's related policies. Mercier notes that Canadian and American immigration authorities "are already working very closely."

The new legislation contains tougher rules for inadmissibility to Canada. There are now nine categories of inadmissibility: security, human and international rights violations, criminality, organized crime, health, financial reasons, misrepresentation, non-compliance, inadmissible family members.

Closing the revolving door

Bill C-11 aims to end the "revolving door syndrome" some critics see in current immigration rules. Under the current Act, a foreign national whose visa application is refused for misrepresentation can immediately submit another application and a foreign national who is removed on a departure order for misrepresentation can immediately return to Canada. But Bill C-11 provides that a foreign national remains inadmissible for two years after being finally determined to be inadmissible for misrepresentation or, if the foreign

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Three denominations bring their covenant to life

GORDON LEGGE

Anglican Bishop Gary Woolsey (l.), rector of Calgary's St. Peter's Anglican Church , Bishop Stephen Kristenson, bishop of Alberta and the North Synod for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, and Calgary Roman Catholic Bishop Frederick Henry.

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — When a historic agreement of co-operation was signed between the Catholics, Anglicans and Lutherans in southern Alberta in 1996, the initiative came from the senior levels of the three mainline denominations.

Five years later, the three denominations are still struggling to make it work within local churches, a forum was told on Oct. 4 — the fifth anniversary of the signing of Covenant '96.

Nevertheless, significant gains have been made and the enthusiasm is greater than it has ever been, bishops from the three denominations told about 50 people attending the forum at St. Mary's College.

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Social justice agencies critical of changes to Immigration Act

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — In the wake of recent terrorist acts, some people are calling for tougher measures for dealing with immigrants and refugees coming to Canada. The Canadian government has responded by making changes to toughen up the Immigration Act (see above story). But refugee workers with Mennonite Central Committee and Citizens for Public Justice are critical of new measures, and believe refugees are being unfairly linked with terrorism.

"Refugees are, more than anyone else, worried about terrorism," asserts Hamdi Mohamed, refugee co-ordinator for Citizens for Public Justice (CPJ). Mohamed, herself, originally came to Canada as a refugee from Somalia. "Refugees are people who have fled terrorism and violence," she says. "[Of] the ones we are advocating for, the majority are women and children."

COURTESY CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

Hamdi Mohamed, CPJ's refugee co-ordinator.

Too many missing pieces

CPJ has responded to the Canadian government's changes to the immigration system, Bill C-11, with a brief called *Too many missing pieces*, which was submitted to government last spring. Mohamed and co-worker Louise Slobodian also appeared before a Senate committee this fall to discuss the bill, and CPJ's recommendations, further.

In the brief, CPJ recommended "the terms 'terrorist' and 'member' of an organization be defined precisely and in a narrow manner.... Without such definitions, peaceful and law-abiding persons can be unfairly labeled as 'terrorist' or as 'members of an organization' simply because of their ethnicity..." CPJ notes, "there is a need for more clarity in definitions of terms, transparency and due process."

"There is no working definition of terrorism right now," says Slobodian. "That's not good enough for innocent people or security reasons."

According to CPJ, "the main thrust of this bill is punitive, putting great emphasis on ... detentions and severe punishment. For example, immigration officers are given much wider powers of search and arrest.... This increase in authority is not necessary to ensure the safety of Canada from perceived external threats or suspicious persons. It does, however, threaten to further encourage the existing practices, that have a reputation for being discriminatory, if not racist."

Possible backlash against refugees

Ever since the events of Sept. 11, says Mohamed, "some of us have been concerned about the implications for refugees" — and about a possible backlash against refugees. But she believes "people involved in acts of terrorism would not apply as refugees," because of the onerous process refugees have to go through to get their status in Canada. "It's demeaning, it's humiliating. I went through this process," she asserts. The process includes fingerprinting, she notes.

While some people are calling for Canada to harmonize its immigration laws with those of the United States, Mohamed disagrees with this idea. "It's a question of a nation's pride. Canada should have a right to decide its refugee policy," she contends. It's also important for Canada to maintain its humanitarian image, as a country which accepts refugees.

Mohamed believes Canada's borders are protected enough by current rules, and don't need to be "tightened up."

Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) is very much involved with refugee work, and in the past 20 years, has facilitated the private

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News

Government tightens Immigration Act

... continued from page 1

national is in Canada, the date the removal order is enforced. This prevents persons from immediately applying to return to Canada and provides a disincentive to misrepresent oneself.

Closing the revolving door

For refugees, the old rules allowed refused claimants to make a new refugee claim if they returned 90 days after leaving Canada. A number of unsuccessful claimants have used this provision to make repetitive claims even though their case presents no new facts or circumstances, states Immigration Canada. That leads to abuses and the resulting situation has been characterized by one Federal Court judge as a "revolving door in and out of Canada."

Bill C-11 implements a new process for considering repeat claims. While the Bill does not permit second claims to the Immigration and Refugee Board, it allows previous claimants to apply for a pre-removal risk assessment to the government if they return to Canada six months after departing Canada. This will enable Canada to stop the revolving door syndrome while still providing a reasonable time period to account for changed country conditions or personal circumstances.

To enforce these new rules on inadmissibility, Bill C-11 includes these provisions:

- broadened organized crime provisions which include persons engaging in transnational people smuggling, trafficking in persons, and money laundering;
- inadmissibility for foreign nationals who commit an offence in the process of seeking entry to Canada (such as possessing or importing narcotics). Currently, no action can be taken against such people until a conviction is obtained;
- loss of permanent resident status by criminals. Under the current Act, enforcement action may be taken against permanent residents convicted of an offence in Canada for which five years or more may be imposed or six months has been imposed. Under C-11, the threshold has been raised to convictions for which 10 years may be imposed. This approach is consistent with the idea that only serious offences can potentially lead to loss of permanent resident status, states Immigration Canada.

There are also higher maximum penalties for smuggling of people. Persons involved in smuggling less than 10 persons could receive stiffer sentences: 10 years imprisonment instead of five, $500,000 fine instead of $100,000. Subsequent convictions would be punishable by up to 14 years in prison and a $1 million fine.

People asked to leave Canada will now have to leave more quickly. Bill C-11 puts a positive obligation on a person subject to an enforceable removal order to leave Canada immediately. This fills a gap in current legislation, which has no provision that compels a person under removal order to leave Canada.

MCC expresses concern about changes for immigrants, refugees

... continued from page 1

sponsorship of over 10,000 refugees coming to Canada. Mennonite churches have spent an estimated $50 million of their own resources, and volunteered thousands of hours of time, according to MCC.

Tim Wichert, MCC's refugee co-ordinator, and other MCC staff have expressed their concerns about Bill C-11 to the government. In a recent brief to the Senate, MCC explained, "We are ... mindful of the recent events of September 11 in the United States. Those were tragic events. But we must not let these events lead to a rising tide of intolerance in Canada. As we look at changes to our Immigration and Refugee policy, let us remember that Canada is a country of immigrants. Refugees have truly enriched the fabric of our society.

No improvement

"Bill C-11 hardly improves the overseas processing of refugees. Without significant improvements overseas, refugees will continue to want to come to Canada to make their claim. Secondly, there must be a better balance between the so-called commitment to get tough and exclude people for past activities, with the need to show compassion, offer a new start, and keep families together.

"If we are serious about controlling terrorism, we must be clear what we mean by it. One country calls terrorists those which another calls freedom fighters. As we discovered earlier this year when the government wanted to bestow honorary citizenship on Nelson Mandela, our legislation actually bars current and past members of the African National Congress of South Africa from Canada because it is an organization which has in the past engaged in violence.

"As a pacifist organization, MCC does not condone violence. But we think there must be clarity.

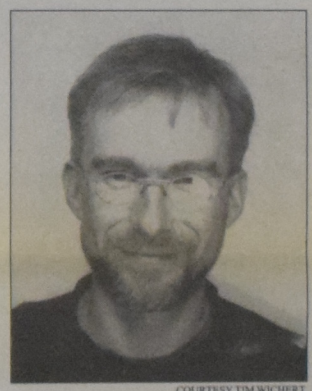
"Security grounds are much too sweeping and ill-defined.... Terrorism should be restricted to acts articulated in UN Conventions (e.g. hijacking, hostage-taking, bombings).... Acts of the past, especially those already punished, should not preclude someone from seeking to start their life anew in Canada."

An unjust manner

MCC notes: "Bill C-11 creates inadmissible classes of people in an unjust and unnecessary manner.... These provisions take us beyond the limits called for in the UN Convention relating to the status of Refugees. They also take us beyond what is necessary for a humane and just society."

Wichert adds, "We don't think violence in the past should necessarily keep people out." MCC and the government have "disagreed on what a terrorist actually is," he observes. "We've got to be careful we don't cast broad brushstrokes and say we're endangered by immigrants and refugees in general. There will always be a handful of people taking advantage of the system."

MCC also states, "We are concerned that churches and other humanitarian organizations may in some cases be subject to enforcement proceedings for assisting desperate people seeking a safe place to live. While organizations like ours should not be immune from prosecution, we would encourage a provision in the Act which clearly differentiates our work from that of criminal organizations and others engaged in trafficking of individuals. We urge the Government to include a requirement in the Act to take into consideration whether those assisting someone to enter Canada are acting out of humanitarian considerations, and not for profit."



COURTESY TIM WICHERT

Tim Wichert

Wichert says, "We are engaged in discussions with the government regarding the development of regulations which will be used to actually implement the new law. That's a positive process. We anticipate that the new law will be ready by next summer.

"I believe that organizations, churches and other refugee advocacy groups need to be brought into the process to help with assessing people. That's why we're arguing that the terrorist principles be tightened up, to ensure that we agree with the government (or more likely agree) on what a terrorist actually is. Then we'll be more likely to assist in identifying such people, and trying to keep them out if appropriate.... If churches and others are involved in 'vouching' for someone, who we've gotten to know through various programs then the government should place some weight on that. Likewise, we (MCC and others) should bear some responsibility for making an assessment of someone's character and standing by them."

On the idea of harmonizing Canada's refugee laws with those of the United States, Wichert says, "I think some harmonization would be helpful. But I think we inevitably would have some differences of opinion." For instance, he says, "the American government has tended to welcome people from south Sudan."

But recently, a Mennonite church in Canada tried to sponsor a Christian refugee from southern Sudan (Mr. Ashien) to come to Canada, only to have him turned down, because of his involvement with the opposition Sudan People's Liberation Movement there. Because of some of the activities that organization had been involved with, he was deemed to be a terrorist, reports MCC. There was no indication that he had participated in any violence. He was found guilty by association. Meanwhile, his son and common law spouse have escaped Sudan, applied to come to Canada, and were accepted. Still, Ashien, has been denied entry to Canada.

Wichert notes that "over 40 per cent of refugee claimants to Canada come from the U.S." It's been easier for them to travel to the U.S., but they often travel from there to Canada. The new permanent resident cards planned by Immigration Canada will be helpful with cross-border security, and customs officers also need to ask the right questions, says Wichert.

Refugees sometimes unfairly linked with terrorism

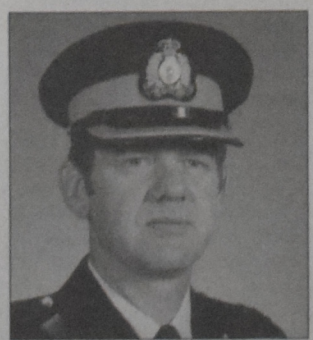
Alan Doerksen

PETERBOROUGH, Ont. — A retired RCMP officer believes that refugees and immigrants are sometimes unfairly connected with terrorism. But a former deputy minister of immigration argues that Canada's immigration system is flawed, and does allow in "bogus refugee claimants," some of whom may be terrorists.

"When we speak of people with criminal motives within our border," says Ralph De Groot, a retired RCMP officer living in Peterborough, "none of those people are immigrants and refugees. They seek entry as illegals. These are people who use illegal means to enter Canada."

'Illegals,' as De Groot refers to them, sometimes come to Canada as visitors or tourists. But he believes it is unusual for criminals to come to Canada as immigrants or refugees, partly because "the last thing [they] would want is a face-to-face confrontation" with

See IMMIGRATION page 5...



COURTESY RALPH DE GROOT

Ralph De Groot

News

Co-operating churches break new ground in Alberta

... *continued from page 1*

For instance, in late October, churches in Medicine Hat will sign the Covenant after initially declining to participate because of theological concerns.

Following a series of presentations in churches from each of the denominations during the past year, a Covenant signing ceremony was held at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Medicine Hat on Oct. 21.

Flagship for ecumenism

"I'm thrilled," says Anna Tremblay, director of the Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs Commission for the Calgary diocese. "I almost feel as if those guys are going to be the flagship for ecumenism in Alberta."

Tremblay hopes that more local initiatives will occur, not only between Anglicans, Roman Catholics and members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) — the country's largest Lutheran denomination, but with other Christian denominations as well.

"I'm trying to get people at the parish level to organize things rather than the diocese organize things," said Tremblay, who helped create the original Covenant.

While priests and pastors complain that ecumenical initiatives are just "one more thing to do" in an already overburdened agenda of activities, Tremblay counters that it simply means looking at existing programs from an ecumenical perspective.

That doesn't mean, however, that churches simply invite their ecumenical cousins to come along, she says. It means having representatives from the three churches actively involved in the programming.

The forum featured retired Anglican Archbishop Barry Curtis, Anglican Bishop Gary Woolsey, Lutheran Bishop Stephen Kristenson and Calgary Roman Catholic Bishop Frederick Henry.

Curtis, who initiated Covenant '96 and was one of the original signatories, began the forum by outlining how the document came to be.

He explained how it has given permission to members from the three denominations to work together in a framework of discipline in five key areas — moral, social, spiritual, intellectual and organizational. By doing so, it is a statement of unity that "Christ wills for his church."

"We're not where we're supposed to be," he said. "We're not where we want to be. Thank God, we're not where we used to be."

"I just have a profound prayer and a great hope that we can work more and more at giving flesh to it," Curtis added.

Bishop Henry then talked about how, when he arrived in Calgary a few years ago, he was amazed to find that the bishops from the three denominations not only talked about ecumenism, they took action.

Since then, the bishops have been involved together in a National Day of Compassion for Seniors who have lost their autonomy, as well as lending support to a coalition opposing VLTs (gambling machines). As well, they supported Henry when he tangled with newspaper magnate Conrad Black.

"I think by and large, the bishops involved with the initial signing were truly inspired leaders," said Henry. "Unfortunately, they were out in front of the rest of the clergy and people in the pews. It was primarily a top-down process."

Further, when Henry visited many Catholic parishes around the diocese who signed the covenant, he saw the documents hanging on church walls, but few concrete signs where it had gone into effect. To provide encouragement, ecumenism has been a topic for priest study days.

As well, Henry also put Tremblay on staff. Tremblay's commission has helped organize Special Ecumenical Education Days. Held biannually, they've dealt with subjects like prayer and spirituality.

Henry talked about Pope John Paul II's own vision for ecumenism. "He really thinks it's possible — complete unity," said Henry.

"Commitment to ecumenism is not an option but an essential part of the fabric of the Catholicism," he said. "We have to get serious about this. It's obviously a serious imperative from the Lord."

"The challenge is to let the call of ecumenism filter down and touch everything we do," he said. In particular, priority must be given to education, both of adults and school children.

Letting the Spirit lead

The Calgary bishop also called for "spiritual ecumenism" by trusting the Spirit of God to lead all of them to closer unity.

There had been a number of overtures from other denominations about becoming involved, said Henry who, as it happens, spoke for a second time in a Baptist church in Calgary on Oct. 7. In fact, some members of the local United Church of Canada were troubled when they were excluded from the Covenant process five years ago.

"We're tentatively exploring and talking with each other," he said. "I don't know where that will go."

For his part, Henry said that he hopes some linkages can be developed with members of the Eastern Orthodox churches. And he hoped that new ways could be found of communicating the fruits of ecumenical dialogue, such as the Lutheran/Roman Catholic Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification, so that they are received and acted upon at the local level.

Lutheran Bishop Kristenson talked about some of the resistance at the local level to the Covenant. Nevertheless, he described it as an amazing gift to the faithful. "Knowing each other in Christ can lead to all kinds of developments that will lead to the glory of God," said the Edmonton-based bishop.

Anglican Bishop Woolsey, rector of St. Peter's Anglican Church in Calgary, pointed out how impetus from the Covenant has blessed other ecumenical programs such as Fire in the Rose, Inn From the Cold and Feed the Hungry.

As clergy from all three denominations face increasing amounts of stress and burnout, Woolsey said the Covenant is a tool to help clergy work together and share their burdens and concerns. He even suggested that appointments could take on an ecumenical dimension.

"The tendency under pressure is to be forced inward," he said. "But by looking outward, led by the Spirit, maybe that is where life will come from."

Minister pastors Lutheran and Anglican congregations in Alberta

Gordon Legge

CALGARY — When the Anglican Church of the Epiphany in Rimbey, Alta., went looking for a new rector, they advertised it as "the Waterloo position". That's because whoever eventually filled the role would also be responsible for pastoring Grace Lutheran Church in Bentley, north of Sylvan Lake.

As such, when Rev. Betty Piwowar took over the two churches on Oct. 1, it became the first shared ministry ever in the Anglican Diocese of Calgary and one of the first in the country since the signing of the historic Waterloo Declaration.

The Waterloo Declaration is an historic agreement signed in Waterloo, Ont. in July between the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the country's largest Lutheran denomination.

After more than two decades of discussions, Anglicans and Lutherans passed — with all but unanimous support — The Waterloo Declaration: Called to Full Communion on July 6.

Stopping short of merger

While stopping short of a "merger" or "union" between the two churches, the declaration formally acknowledges agreement on a wide range of liturgical issues, establishes full interchangeability between clergy of both churches and permits full "communion rights."

The agreement creates a religious fellowship numbering more than one million church members throughout Canada. Senior officials with both denominations in the Calgary area say it is simply formalizing an arrangement that has become increasingly commonplace in recent years, particularly in the rural areas.

But it will also serve to accelerate discussions about shared ministries. "It officially opens the door to the exploration of the possibilities of working in partnership," says the Ven. Barry Foster, executive officer for the Anglican Diocese of Calgary.

Rather than be in competition, they can focus on cooperation, he said. There are no theological differences to speak of. They share the same liturgical calendar and their liturgies are almost identical.

More and more the churches will begin to examine ways they can share human resources and programs and not duplicate each other's efforts while, at the same time, respecting and maintaining their own traditions and identity.

Furthermore, Foster thinks it will probably strengthen Covenant '96, an agreement between Anglicans, Lutherans and Roman Catholics in southern Alberta to cooperate as much as possible in all areas.

"It might push us even further into relationship with each other," Foster said.

New opportunities

Lutheran Bishop Stephen Kristenson agrees. "They have new opportunities for new ways of working together," he said. "They can work and speak together to the world."

Kristenson was particularly excited by the event since it is a culmination of ministry work that started for him in the early 1970s. He began his ministry as a pilot with LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots) in northern Saskatchewan where he routinely witnessed and practised shared ministry.

But what does it mean for Anglicans and Lutherans operating at the local level?

Rev. Bill Bulger says that this is something that the laity have wanted for a long time. "They don't know why we haven't done it already," says Bulger, a Lutheran pastor who was on the national working group for the Waterloo Declaration.

"They see this as an opportunity in smaller communities to put new life into congregations that are struggling," says Bulger, who has pastored a joint Lutheran-Anglican congregation in Hinton for eight years.

The arrangement in Hinton developed eight years ago when bishops from both denominations started talking about how they could undertake shared ministry that would meet the needs of Grace Lutheran, with 270 members, and St. Francis of Assisi Anglican Church, with 120 members.

"These are two distinct congregations who kept their identity," says Bulger. "The Lutherans tend to sing a little more than the Anglicans."

Although they have separate services, the two churches conduct a joint Bible study and Confirmation service. "Both communities are better off for it."

"It's really quite neat," says Bulger, who has come to be viewed as the city's chaplain since it's opened up opportunities for involvement with other churches as well.

"What I enjoy most is the message it gives to the community at large. They see the two churches working co-operatively rather than in division. I think it's fostered real community outreach."

Meanwhile the two churches in Rimbey and Bentley are about to find out what it will mean for them.

Editorial

The ideals by which we live

Harry der Nederlanden

"Times of trouble prompt us to recall the ideals by which we live."

This opening sentence of a book by Michael Sandel struck me as very fitting for what we have been doing over the past two months. North Americans have been doing a lot of soul searching since Sept. 11. When life's fragility is revealed so starkly, we re-assess our priorities.

Last Sunday, still not able to sit for long, I stayed home and tuned in on Robert Schuller's *Hour of Power*. In his sermon, Schuller contrasted the idea of life as a journey with life as an escapade or as an odyssey. The Christian life has a destination. So Christians are people on a journey; they have a goal, an end. Too many people, lamented Schuller, don't have any purpose in their lives. They just go from escapade to escapade, or they wander, grope their way through life, not sure where they're headed.

Life as a race

Schuller said a lot of things that are true. Paul uses such imagery too. He speaks of life as a race, for example, and of aiming for the goal and winning the prize. We've often heard it said that Christianity introduced the idea of history as a straight line, as having a beginning, middle and end. So we tend to respond positively to this sort of imagery.

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In this time of crisis, Schuller pointed out, churches are busy because people have been pulled up short and been confronted with ultimate questions. They want to get in touch with the fundamental purposes of life.

The question his sermon raised in my mind was this: Weren't the great majority of those hurrying in and out of the Twin Towers extremely purpose-oriented people? Anyone who wants to be successful in the economy represented by those two skyscrapers (and this isn't just an American economy, but a global one) has to be a disciplined person, someone who has a clear idea of where he's going and what steps he's going to take to get there.

Spelling out long term, short term goals

Everyone and every institution and organization from corporations to churches have been formulating mission statements, spelling out long term and short term goals, assessing where they are in terms of these and drawing up step-by-step strategies for moving from here to there. Woe to those who do not have a career plan, preferably before they are out of high school so that they can get the jump on others by getting into a prestigious university.

Kids can no longer just live their lives and more or less follow in the footsteps of their parents. They are almost forced to become futurologists and plan on the basis of what is yet to be.

Churches, too, can no longer just follow 'tried and tested' ways of worship, organization and fellowship. They do demographic studies of the neighborhood, conduct surveys, hire consultants, and draw up five-year plans. It is not enough just to *be* church, to just be there like a comfortable, predictable friend; we must have "purpose-driven churches". According to some church-growth gurus, the more a church is run like a business corporation, the more likely it is to succeed, that is, to grow numerically.

Purposiveness indispensable

Yes, we have become acclimated to a social order in which purposiveness is not just highly valued but indispensable. We learn to think in terms of aiming at a goal and getting there in as direct, as efficient a way as possible. At the beginning of the 20th century, such people as we have become were still somewhat novel. Max Weber speculated that the emergence of such calculating, goal-oriented people had something to do with the rise of Calvinism. From him, rightly or wrongly, we've learned to speak of the Calvinist work ethic. Nowadays corporations even administer tests to determine whether a prospective employee has the requisite traits of the corporate go-getter who can keep his eye on the corporate goal.

What this entire cluster of goal-terms presupposes, however, is that the power to achieve that goal is in our hands, and that all we need to do is to follow the course that we've projected. Is this the kind of purposiveness that Scripture wants to instill in us?

Recall the story of Abraham.

Called from Ur of the Chaldees, he travels here and there, sets up camp hither and yon. He ends up in Egypt a couple of times. He becomes a nomad.

Yet, his wanderings do have a goal, for God promises him a land of his own and progeny as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. His seed will become an elect people among the peoples of the earth. That's something to dream of, something to aim for.

Yet, Abraham and Sarah grow older and older. Past child-bearing age. No children come. The way to the promised destination seems closed. God seems to have nodded off.

Taking matters into their own hands

So they finally take matters into their own hands. If God won't come through, they know how to overcome the obstacles of nature and realize their dream. What's wrong with that? They are only making God's promises their own; their goal is the same as God's.

So Ishmael is born, the dark Doppelganger.

When Isaac, Son of Laughter, is born at last and the bridge to the future seems secure, what does God do? He asks Abraham to sacrifice this, his only son, not just the child that he loves but also the symbol and seal that God will fulfill his promises and bring him to his destination.

Again and again in Scripture God thwarts the way to the future or deflects his people from the path that is most direct.

The children of Israel end up not in the land of promise, but in Egypt, the land of bondage. Their escape from bondage and their journey to the land of promise becomes a forty-year trek through the wilderness. And the wait for the promised Messiah goes through postponement after postponement, prophet after prophet, exile after exile, and then it is fulfilled in such an unexpected way that only a few are there to celebrate the birth.

On a journey with God

Yes, we are on a journey with God. Scripture, however, gives us little reason to suppose that this is a journey that will go on a straight line toward a destination that we can appropriate and own.

In fact, the greatest temptation of religion is to assume that our goals, our destination is also God's.

This is not to say that God has left us in the dark. He sent us his Son, whose life journey was also cut off mid-stream. In fact, his journey is epitomized by the cross, the sacrifice prefigured by Abraham's thwarted sacrifice. The cross means many things, but one of the things it means is that we cannot plan and complete our life's journey on our own. It is not a straight line with a goal that we can factor into our planning. The cross teaches us that we must learn to die to setting our own goals, that God's goals may triumph through us.

"By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going."

The writer of Hebrews says: "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." The King James Version, which I was given to memorize has: "...the evidence of things not seen."

There's a rupture, a chasm between our beginning, our own understanding, and our destination. It's one we cannot see across. But in that chasm stands Jesus Christ, the very embodiment of faith, who now journeys with us by his Spirit, sealing unto us the promises of our covenanting God.

And when he sees us hurrying to our self-appointed destinations and goals, he says, "Consider the lilies of the field...."

News

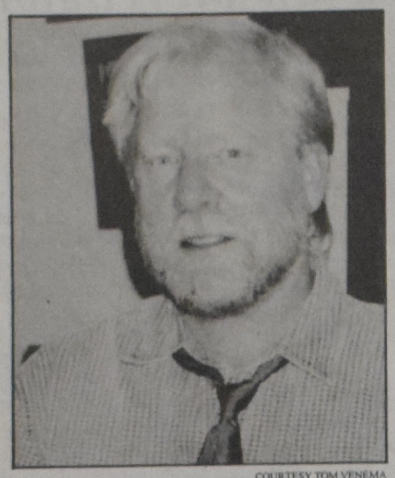
Canadian Christian counsellors help traumatized firefighters

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — Two Christian counsellors from St. Catharines, Ont., have just returned from the intense experience of counseling traumatized firefighters and their families in New York City.

Tom Venema and John Stob — of the counseling firm Lidkea, Stob, Venema and Associates — went with a team of people from the Niagara region to help out firefighters affected by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York City. They spent a week in New York, from Oct. 7 to 13, working with the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation and Federal Employee Management Assistance.

"Our work was to deal with the firefighters who had been involved in Sept. 11," explains Venema. "To do counseling with them: detox, debrief them." They also met parents and widows of firefighters, helping to facilitate grieving.



COURTESY TOM VENEMA

Tom Venema

Tough questions

Venema says he and Stob dealt with unsettling questions such as:

"What do we do for a memorial service?"

"Why am I alive? Why me?"

"Why were we sent in in the first place?"

About 350 firefighters were lost in the collapse of the World Trade Centers, leaving more than 1,000 children who have lost a parent, reports Venema. These families now face "the empty chair and the agony."

After counseling, says Venema, "John and I would be in tears at the end of the day." New York's firefighters had "horrific things ... to deal with."

"Three times we were at Ground Zero, doing support for firefighters," says Venema, who recalls that the smell of burnt human flesh left a strong imprint on his memory. He and Stob had photo IDs and firefighter crests on their shoulders. They also had to show identification at the hotel where they stayed.

All support workers were given a card with Mychal's Prayer on it, which impressed Venema. Here is the prayer:

"Lord, take me where you want me to go. Let me meet who you want me to meet. Tell me what to say, and keep me out of your way."

Venema was also impressed by the attitude of New Yorkers on the streets. When others found out why he was there, "They'd hug you on the street, they'd say 'Thank you,' 'God bless you.'" Some would even offer to buy him a drink. "They were very appreciative of international help." The disaster "has united the city," he observes.

It was important for New York's firefighters to get outside help with counseling. Venema reports that for 11,000 firefighters in the city, there are only 11 counselors on staff. But New York is planning to hire more. Firefighters who were involved with the events of Sept. 11 are not allowed to work at Ground Zero, notes Venema.

Some Canadian firefighters have been going to New York just to attend funerals of their fallen comrades — "to show respect for firefighters," explains Venema. "There are funerals going on every day."

Long-term needs

New Yorkers will also have some long-term counseling needs to deal with, asserts Venema. For firefighters, these will include "trying to get past their guilt." For New Yorkers in general, there will be concerns about safety, facilitating of grieving, and "teaching them to let go.... A lot of this is going to take some time."

With the army and the National Guard present in the city, "it's hard to tell everyone to relax," says Venema. "The mayor is being very functional: 'Get back to work.'"

Venema caught a glimpse of the spirit of New York business people one day when he saw a well-dressed businessman walking determinedly down Broadway, carrying a gas mask.

Venema is not sure if he and Stob will be allowed to go back to New York for further counseling. He notes that everyone at his firm has a Christian perspective, but it is not called a Christian counseling agency, and "we don't try to indoctrinate people."

Immigration system open to abuse, says critic

... continued from page 2

government representatives. But De Groot is in favor of tightening up of our immigration system, to prevent 'illegals' from coming to Canada.

First line of defense abroad

In defending Canada from terrorists, "the first line of defence comes abroad," states De Groot. Canada needs to have more effective intelligence information about such people. "I think the recent Sept. 11 activities clearly demonstrate [that].... Canada does employ screening processes abroad, including intelligence activity," De Groot notes. CSIS, Canada's spy agency, does some of this. But De Groot feels CSIS should be allowed to do more "offensive" (as opposed to defensive) intelligence gathering abroad — something which is now prohibited.

De Groot believes that Canada needs a clear working definition of 'terrorism.'

Immigration policy needs to fit times

Tom Kent, a former policy secretary to Prime Minister Lester Pearson and a former deputy minister of immigration, takes a different view, and is critical of Canada's immigration system and of Bill C-11. "It is our peaceable society that will be made insecure by failure to fit immigration policy to the times. The danger is heightened in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on Wall Street and the Pentagon," Kent told *London Free Press* columnist Rory Leishman recently.

Kent warns that the system is wide open to abuse. Under current rules, all refugee claimants, no matter how bogus, are entitled upon arrival in Canada to free legal counsel to guide them through one appeal after another as their claim for refugee status winds through the system. The system is so cumbersome, notes Kent, that, "appeals to stay in Canada can be dragged out for years."

Ample time to set down roots

As a result, what he calls 'bogus refugee claimants' have ample time to set down roots in Canada. They make friends, some get married and have children. "The humanitarian case against deportation becomes stronger with every legal delay," Kent observes. "And from time to time, as the administrative burden of unfinished cases mounts, the government devises some kind of amnesty to allow many of the applicants to stay without further proceedings."

Prior to 1985, Canada had a refugee determination system that worked reasonably well, thanks to the Immigration Act, 1967, that Kent initiated, reports Leishman. This law assured refugee claimants the right to an examination under oath by a senior immigration officer who reported to the Refugee Status Advisory Committee. If the committee rejected the claim, the applicant could have the decision reviewed by an independent Immigration Appeal Board. Except on points of law, there were no further appeals to the courts.

But in 1985, the Supreme Court decreed that everyone who shows up at a Canadian airport or other border point is entitled to exactly the same legal rights guaranteed to every Canadian citizen by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Kent has called upon Parliament to invoke the "notwithstanding" clause to enact a judge-proof law, "that confines the legal protections of the Charter to persons whose residence in Canada is legally sanctioned." The government has said No to this proposal, reports Leishman.

For a quick Letter to the Editor, please send it by fax to: (905)- 682-8313, or by e-mail to: cceditor@aol.com

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'Be bold ... for the Lord your God is with you'

After reading the last two issues of *Christian Courier*, I was reminded of God's promise to Joshua before he led the Israelites into the promised land. "Be bold, be courageous, do not be afraid for the Lord your God is with you."

Most people fear change and find it difficult. There's comfort in structure, predictability, routine and familiarity, but the events of Sept. 11 have caused many to re-evaluate their attitudes and priorities on how they think, spend and live. Change has come to North America through unprecedented fear.

Not business as usual

The guarded, armed CF-18s at CFB Trenton, the newspaper headline *Mall sealed off after suspicious package found,* the long traffic line-ups at the American border, the proposed anti-terrorism legislation, the increased sales of gas masks, bomb shelters and Bibles, speculation about the "end times," greater appreciation and love for children and spouses, people's fear of entering government buildings as well as flying remind me, that for many, it's not business as usual. Much has changed since Sept. 11.

Yet, some things never change. The Lord our God is the same today as yesterday, and will be tomorrow, and for that reason I am not afraid.

The terrorist attack was no accident. It did not happen apart from God's rule and knowledge. In spite of it, our God is the ruler, yet (read God's conversation with Satan in Job). In the same way Christ's death was in accordance with God's plan and purpose. Acts 2: 23 "This man [Jesus] was handed over to you [Jews] by God's set purpose and foreknowledge."

Love God and our neighbor

So what are Christians called to do post-Sept 11? Well, let's not spend all of our time analyzing the reasons for the attack. After all, God's ways are so much higher than ours. Instead, we would do well to concentrate and act upon God's will for our lives — to love Him and our neighbor. Max Lucado writes in *The Gift for all People,* "Seeing Jesus is what Christianity is all about. Christian service, in its purest form, is nothing more than imitating him who we see. To see his majesty and imitate him, that is the sum of Christianity."

Love requires kindness to your Muslim, Jewish or drunken neighbor. Have patience with the person who's finding it difficult to catch on. Be glad, don't brag about the promotion you received. Try out someone else's ideas. Praise, rather than envy or make rude comments about someone else's accomplishments. Lighten up a bit. Don't give up.

Pray for those who persecute you. Trust, and be hopeful, knowing that when you travel with God, he will be with you, and evil will be overcome by good.

Irene Vander Spruit
Stirling, Ont.

Planned law on religious hatred prompts protests

Cedric Pulford (ENI)

LONDON, England — In its efforts to prevent acts of religious hatred since the September 11 terror attacks, the British government is planning to introduce a law "of which the Taliban might be proud", according to civil libertarian and lawyer John Mortimer.

Mortimer, who created the television character Rumpole of the Bailey — an exasperating but shrewd and lovable defence barrister — complained that the proposed law against incitement to religious hatred was "a disastrous attack on the freedom to debate one of the most important subjects of the world — religion".

In a move to protect the Muslim community in the aftermath of the September attacks, the British home secretary, David Blunkett, announced that he planned to extend the law on incitement to include religious as well as racial hatred.

The maximum penalty for the offence, part of a package of emergency measures due to be introduced into Parliament before Christmas, will be seven years.

Blunkett said he was determined that "attention seekers and extremists" should not be able to use religion "to divide and fragment communities in our country in this difficult time".

His plans were welcomed by the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the chief representative body for Muslims in the country.

Biggest freedom is freedom from hate

MCB secretary general, Yousuf Bhailok, said that the changes were "steps in the right direction" and an "important development". He praised Blunkett's comment that "the biggest freedom of all is the freedom from hate."

Elsewhere, however, critics ranging from civil libertarians to professional comedians were fearful that jokes about religion would become criminalized.

Rowan Atkinson, famous for his hapless Mr. Bean character and hisportrayal of an inept novice vicar in the hit film "Four Weddings and a Funeral", said he was "aghast" at the proposed law.

Joel Edwards, general director of the Evangelical Alliance, also issued a warning about the proposed law, saying that it might restrict the Christian mission to spread the gospel.

In a letter to *The Times of London,* he commented: "It would be ironic in the extreme if a well-intentioned piece of legislation aimed at protecting religious freedom were to have the opposite effect."

Seeds of disaster

Interviewed by ENI, Joel Edwards said: "Any law which is fast-tracked in the interests of one group contains the seeds of disaster."

He expressed concern that "in an emotive environment, things that could otherwise be negotiated produce a much harder response."

Edwards pointed to an official warning, announced on October 24, to a prominent Christian radio station that it had breached broadcasting rules about criticizing other religions.

Christian radio station criticized

The Radio Authority, which has regulatory powers, followed up complaints and found that Premier Christian Radio had aired offensive material about the Koran as well as Hindu and Buddhist scriptures.

This illustrated, Edwards said, the challenge of advancing the unique claims of Christ while minimizing statements that were offensive to other faiths. The Evangelical Alliance would stand firm against the victimization of members of other faiths, but Edwards appealed to the British government not to confuse religious pluralism with syncretism — "to pretend that faiths are all the same, or where there are differences they don't matter."

He indicated that religious leaders needed to accept some blame: "Religion is in denial. It may be suggested that there is no such thing as bad religion, yet around the world bad political ideologies are being sustained by a framework of bad religions."

Re: *The prayer of Jabez*

I appreciated the book review of Bruce Wilkinson's *The Prayer of Jabez,* by Oky Carrigan (September 17, 2001). I consulted a Dutch commentary written by Dr. K. Roubos (*De Prediking Van Het Oude Testament,* Callenbach-Nijkerk 1969) in which he writes that there is powerful piece of preaching in this passage (1 Chronicles 4:9,10). He points out that the word 'pain', the meaning of his name (oseb) is a reference to the pain expressed in Genesis 3:16. In his need in which he experienced his name as a curse, he called to the covenant God of Israel to be true to his name and promise to give his blessing through the generations. God , in his sovereign way, opened heaven to Israel and to Jabez as well, making a covenant with him against 'fate'. Jabez too, was blessed in the line of the generations — the theme of the geneologies.

I found this historical redemptive approach to this passage more helpful than the out of context interpretation of Bruce Wilkinson.

Nick Cornelisse,
Pastor Calvary CRC,
Ottawa

Doctrinal rightness and rightness of ecclesiastical position are important, but only as a starting point to go on into a living relationship -- and not as ends in themselves.

... Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984)

Armenian Apostolic Church celebrates 1,700th anniversary

(ENS) — One of the world's oldest churches, the Armenian Apostolic Church, is celebrating the 1,700th anniversary of the adoption of Christianity in ancient Armenia, reports ENS. It was the first nation to officially adopt Christianity as a state religion in 301 A.D., which then became a powerful force in preserving the identity of the Armenians who have lived under foreign rule for much of their history.

This year's celebrations come at a significant time for Armenia, just emerging from 70 years of Communist rule by the Soviet Union, and a bloody war with neighboring Azerbaijan. It now faces the task of rebuilding, says ENS.

Pope visited Armenia

To mark the anniversary, Pope John Paul II visited Armenia in September and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos of Constantinople (Istanbul), symbolic leader of Orthodox churches worldwide, will visit soon. As part of the celebrations, Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Anglican leaders attended the consecration on Sept. 23 of a new cathedral in Armenia's capital, Yerevan, dedicated to St. Gregory the Illuminator. According to tradition, the country was evangelized by the apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew but it was St. Gregory who baptized King Tiridates III — who then proclaimed Armenia a Christian state.

Book Review

Canada's teens: Are they better or worse than teens of years gone by?

Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow

By Reginald Bibby

Stoddart, 2001
ISBN 0773761810, 224 pp.

Reviewed by Ron de Boer

If you're like many adults, you're probably under the impression that teens today are worse than teens at any other time in modern civilization. The media reports on school shootings, gang murders, teenage sex and rampant drug use at rave parties. How could you *not* think teens are in crisis when *Maclean's* magazine, CBC News and all the nation's newspapers give bold headlines and endless commentary on youth violence, and teen's alleged reckless abandon in areas like sexual relations and drugs?

Your own impression of teens these days might come only during worship services. You might feel those old pangs of resentment and loathing when you hear teens whispering during the congregational prayer or putting on their baseball caps before they are out of the sanctuary. And you might be one of those adults who say with confidence, teens in your day were different. Translation: teens were better in your day. If you didn't have children or grandchildren that prove otherwise, you might even think teens are despicable, amoral, sexually charged animals who are either buying brand products or looking for someone to beat up.

But esteemed sociologist Reginald Bibby asserts that while the teen package we're observing might seem radically different than what we remember from our own mirrors, teens today really have not changed much from teens way back in the 1940s and 1950s. His book, *Canada's Teens: Today, Yesterday, and Tomorrow* gives extensive statistical data that proves today's teens are getting a bad rap by the media and social critics.

Educator Anthony Kerr once said, "I have a pretty fair idea of history over the past twenty-five centuries and cannot recall a time when the old were fully satisfied with the young." Bibby divides *Canada's Teens* into three sections: first he looks at today's teens, then he compares them to teens from the past, and, based on his findings, offers us an optimistic glimpse of teens in the future. His book, based on extensive interviews with 3,500 teens from coast-to-coast is a breath of fresh air in a media landscape that is often only interested in the bad choices a small percentage of teens make. What follows are some highlights of *Canada's Teens*.

Teens today

Bibby gave teens a list of 27 characteristics and asked them to indicate how important they *personally* consider each to be. The survey found that there is nothing teenagers value more highly than *friendship* and *freedom*. Only 65 per cent of males felt "being loved" was very important as opposed to 87 per cent of females; 65 per cent of females felt "family life" was really important while only 51 per cent of males felt the same. While only 23 per cent of males and 35 per cent of females felt "spirituality" was important, only 10 per cent of teens felt "religious group involvement" was important.

Teens were asked what they saw as important interpersonal values. Traits such as "honesty," humor," and "cleanliness" ranked high for both males and females. However, 87 per cent of females felt "honesty" was very important while only 62 per cent of males felt the same. Bibby then gave teens several scenarios and asked them whether or not they "approve" or "disapprove" of certain behavior. Some 89 per cent of teens say they agree that if they go through a door they should hold it for the person behind them; 86 per cent believe they should say "sorry" when they accidentally bump into someone; and 80 per cent disapprove of an able-bodied person parking in a handicapped stall.

Do these stats give you a different view of teens? Bibby then asked teens, "If a person gives you change for what you bought and your realize he/she has given you $10 more than you were supposed to receive, what would you do?": 27 per cent of females and 41 per cent of males say they would keep the $10 and keep walking; 42 per cent of females and 28 per cent of males would go back and return the $10. Later in the book, Bibby asks parents and grandparents the same question: 88 per cent of grandparents (aged 56-75), 78 per cent of parents (aged 36-55) and 57 per cent of young adults (aged 20-35) say they would return the $10.

CHRISTIAN COURIER PHOTO

Dr. Reginald Bibby covers issues such as spirituality and honesty in his latest book.

Teens yesterday

To try to give some relevance to the study of teens today, Bibby spends the second section of his book studying teens from the past. Particularly, he compares teens today to teens in the '80s and '90s, when he conducted a similar study. Generally speaking, today's teens compare with teens from the 1984 in almost every category.

Teens from the 1992 study were worried more about their friends, education and future. Bibby concludes that much of the findings of the way teens feel is based on the "adult" world in which they live. For example, in 1992, we were on the verge of a technological breakthrough in computers and the Internet, our schools were preaching the doom of our terrible environmental problems, and diseases such as AIDS topped the chart of social concerns among teens. In Canada, the 1990s was a time when Quebec was threatening to separate from Canada, and many teens were seeing the results of the recession within their own families.

Teens today rank school violence near the top of their social concerns; a higher percentage of teens today report they don't feel safe at school. A higher percentage of teens today (more than any other time) don't trust ministers, teachers or politicians. We have seen a media frenzy in the past decade exposing unfaithful evangelists, dishonest politicians and sexually abusive teachers. The adult world where today's teens are shaped hasn't been a very positive one, has it?

Perhaps the most fascinating part of this second section is a comparison of topics and opinions between today's teens and other population groups right now. Bibby posed similar questions to teens (aged 15-19), grandparents (56-75), parents (36-55) and young adults (20-35). When asked, for example, if marijuana should be legalized, 50 per cent of teens say it should. And 34 per cent of grandparents, 49 per cent of parents, and 58 per cent of young adults also agree. When asked if they have confidence in the police, only 62 per cent of the teens surveyed say they do. Similarly, only 70 per cent of grandparents, 64 per cent of parents, and 66 per cent of young adults report they trust the police! But teens have more confidence in schools: 63 per cent of teens say they have confidence in schools. Combined, only 47 per cent of the other adult groups say they have confidence in today's schools. While 40 per cent of teens say they have confidence in religious organizations, only 33 per cent of the combined adults have any confidence in organized religion.

And how about this finding? When Bibby asked the different groups if they would want a home like the one they grew up in, only 61 per cent of parents (aged 36-55) agreed while 75 per cent of today's teens say they would like a home like the one they have right now.

In terms of faith and religion, adults and teens are nearly identical: 21 per cent of adults and 22 per cent of teens say they attend church weekly; 73 per cent of adults and 68 per cent of teens believe God cares about them, while 72 per cent of adults and 65 per cent of teens believe Jesus is the divine son of God. Interestingly, more teens (78 per cent) believe in life after death then adults (68 per cent).

And you might be surprised when today's teens are compared to young adults and parents regarding participation and attitudes about sex and drugs, too. Believe it or not, today's grandparents had more sex during their teenage years than today's teens. Bibby's findings are supported by both StatsCan and Forrester Research in the United States.

Teens tomorrow

In the final section of *Canada's Teens*, Bibby attempts to figure out what teens will be like in the next ten years. Using demographic data and tracking trends and fads in the media and technology, his findings aren't all that surprising: teens will more or less be the same as teens from the past. And, Bibby writes, "teenagers will eventually become pretty much like the rest of us. And they, like us, will discover a well-kept secret: adulthood, that vantage point from which we worry so much about teenagers, is not a cure for the problems of youth."

Bibby's book is packed with fascinating studies and comparisons. The beauty of the book is that the reader can make her own connections and contrasts based on the different charts and areas of the questionaire. And the thing I like about the book's overall thesis: teens aren't all that different from adults but tend to get a bad rap by media and social critics selling stories to adults who have convinced themselves they were much different (interpretation: better) than today's teens. Although the book is dense with statistics, charts and graphs, Bibby offers interesting commentaries to interpret the findings, and, more importantly, includes many of the comments by the teens who took the survey. Not convinced? Believe you can unearth a different interpretation of today's teens? Get the book, and you'll hear the real voices of Canada's teens.

EnviroFacts. . .

- Idling vehicles waste three percent of the fuel used in Ontario and give off twice as many pollutants as a vehicle under power.
- Today's engines require no more than 30 seconds of idling at start-up, even on winter days, and 10 seconds of idling burns more fuel than restarting the engine.
- An idling engine is not working at its most efficient temperature which means that fuel combustion is incomplete and is harmful to the engine.

- News Canada

Church

Klaas and Nellie Brobbel earn Religious Liberty Award

MARKHAM, Ont. — The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) announced in late October that the agency is pleased to honor Klaas and Nellie Brobbel with the Religious Liberty Award.

This award is presented yearly by EFC to a person(s) who has made an outstanding contribution to the cause of religious liberty, either by drawing attention to or alleviating abuses of human rights, or by modeling a Christ-like endurance and leadership, while undergoing religious persecution.

COURTESY VOICE OF THE MARTYRS

The Brobbels receive the EFC's Religious Liberty Award. From left to right: Janet Epp Buckingham, EFC's General Legal Council, Nellie and Klaas Brobbel and Gary Walsh, EFC President.

Ministering to persecuted church

Klaas and Nellie Brobbel are worthy of this award, says EFC. They have served the Voice of the Martyrs (VOM) for 28 years, ministering to the persecuted church and highlighting religious persecution to the Canadian church.

Klaas Brobbel was born and raised in the Netherlands, where he completed his vocational training. In the summer of 1958, at the age of 17, he and his family immigrated to Canada, where he began his 10-year career in tool and die designing. In 1973 Klaas felt called by the Lord to become the executive director of Jesus to the Communist World, now called The Voice of the Martyrs. He has traveled extensively across Canada and other parts of the world, speaking and organizing meetings on behalf of the persecuted church.

In addition, Klaas has served on numerous boards and committees; as an elder in the Clarkson Christian Reformed Church, national board member of the Christian Labour Association of Canada and as a member of the Religious Liberty Commission of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

Klaas has been married to his wife Nellie for 38 years and they have three children and nine grandchildren.

Nellie Brobbel was born and raised in Holland. In the summer of 1960, at the age of 19, she immigrated to Canada and began her career as an office clerk for a mid-sized Insurance Company. Her initial introduction to the persecuted Church was by reading Pastor Richard Wurmbrand's well-known book *Tortured for Christ*. It touched her so much that she began to sell used clothing, with all the proceeds going to VOM-USA.

In 1970, God called Nellie into this ministry where her knowledge of Spanish proved a great benefit to the mission of VOM in their work with Central America and Cuba. In addition to her work as VOM's executive secretary, Nellie has been involved in numerous activities and presently serves as an elder at the Clarkson Christian Reformed Church.

On October 26, at the Ottawa Marriott Hotel, Klaas and Nellie Brobbel received the Religious Liberty Award at the gathering of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's General Council.

Unprecedented opportunity to present Christ to India's 'untouchables'

Michael Ireland (Chief Correspondent, ASSIST News Service)

NEW DELHI, INDIA (ANS) — It's an event that could well rival the first Day of Pentecost — on which 3,000 new believers came to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour: about one million of India's 300 million Dalits ("untouchables") will meet at a rally on Sunday, Nov. 4, 2001, in the Indian capital of New Delhi to renounce Hinduism en masse.

Tens of millions of Dalits across the country are expected to follow their lead in coming months, according to HCJB World Radio.

Will the Dalits have an opportunity to embrace Christianity? "Yes," says Rochunga Pudaite, president of Bibles for the World, himself an "untouchable" born in the northeastern Indian state of Manipur, who will speak at the Dalit rally to present the gospel.

Christians in India, influenced by 3,000 years of casteism, were initially skeptical about taking in thousands of Dalit converts. Then Pudaite appealed to dynamic 43-year-old Dalit leader Ram Raj and asked him to come to Colorado Springs, Colorado, to learn more about Christianity. Raj agreed, listened attentively and invited Pudaite to speak at the rally.

Bibles for the World will distribute one million New Testaments and Gospels of John — some printed in seven languages — to those at the event along with the new book, "The Quest for Freedom and Dignity," written by respected Indian intellectual Vishal Mangalwadi. Thousands of video copies of the "Jesus" film translated in local languages also will be distributed.

Who are Dalits?

Dalits, also called "untouchables," Harijans or "outcastes," are at the bottom of Indian society, outside of the caste system. They are India's poorest, most deprived, hungry, shunned and victimized people. The 260 million to 300 million Dalits, a word that means "oppressed" or "broken to pieces," have few opportunities for advancement. Most Dalits say their fate is determined at birth. For the first time, they will have the opportunity to know rebirth through Christ.

If the "untouchables" respond to Christianity, it would be one of the greatest revivals of all time. The implications are staggering. Thousands of volunteers are being trained to counsel the new believers. Up to 300 new churches could be established in New Delhi alone.

David Kealy, who leads HCJB World Radio's "City by City" initiative to establish and maintain radio ministries in developing countries, will be in India to support Pudaite — and others in the India Church network — at the Nov. 4 rally. In partnership with Bibles for the World, HCJB World Radio will help plant local Christian radio stations across India, encouraging believers in their faith and training new converts.

How we can help

Pray for all the preparations and for God's blessing as His Word is proclaimed, for the training of the volunteers who will respond to the new converts, and for the printing and distribution of New Testaments, Gospels and "Jesus" videos.

You may also give money and support for literature, training and for the planting of Christian radio ministries across India. (For more information, you may contact James A. Ferrier, HCJB World Radio U.S. Ministries, Communications Director by e-mail at jferrier@hcjb.org or by Phone at 1-719-590-9800; Fax: 1-719-590-9357. You can also visit **www.hcjb.org** and **www.beyondthecall.org** on the Internet.

Fewer Bibles printed in China

(Compass) — Fewer Bibles are being printed this year in China. While on a visit to Europe in June, the Rev. Bao Jiayuan of the China Christian Council stated that during the first few months of 2001, the total number of Bibles printed in Nanjing has decreased slightly. Rev. Bao said that this was due to the campaign against the Falun Gong cult and because some people could not afford to buy Bibles. In the last few years, the number of Bibles printed at the Amity Printing Press in Nanjing has averaged about 2.6 million copies annually. The total number of Bibles and New Testaments printed since the press was established in 1987 is now over 26 million.

Since the government publicly recognizes only 15 million Protestant Christians in China and has no interest in supplying Bibles to non-Christians, it may be that it is planning to gradually decrease Bible production. If this is the case, it could have a severe effect on the church. Dearth of the Scriptures could lead to a surge in the influence of cults, already a serious problem.

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Muslim terrorists attack worshippers in Pakistan

CC Staff

On Sunday, Oct. 28, six gunmen on motorcycles pulled up before the St. Dominic Church in Behawalpur, Pakistan, shot the policeman on guard, and then entered the church and sprayed the congregation gathered inside for worship with bullets from automatic weapons. They killed 16 and wounded dozens more — men, women and children.

Although it was a Catholic church, the people gathered for worship were members of the (Protestant) Church of Pakistan, which had been sharing the building with the Catholic congregation for 30 years.

Urging restraint, prudence

According to the *Washington Times*, the six bearded young men shouted, "Graveyard of Christians," "Pakistan and Afghanistan" and "This is just the beginning." Although no group claimed responsibility, authorities believe it was a radical Islamic group, because all the men were bearded.

Christians in Pakistan had expressed fears that they would become targets of reprisals even before the U.S. began bombing the Taliban, and in late September the National Council of Churches of Pakistan issued a statement urging the U.S. administration to "exercise restraint and prudence" in dealing with the terrorist crisis.

"Muslims here will treat [an attack] as an insult to Islam, and Christians will become victims of the attacks here as Christianity is treated as a symbol of the West," Achilles deSouza, vicar general of the Catholic archdiocese of Karachi warned in an interview with ENI.

Pakistan is 97 per cent Muslim, with Christians comprising about two per cent of a population of 150 million. There are very strict laws in Pakistan against evangelism, and converting from Islam can mean death. So Christians are almost all descended from families that became Christian three or four generations ago, and they live apart in Christian ghettoes or villages.

Since the massacre in Behawalpur, Christians in other towns and cities are living in great fear. They especially dread Fridays, the Muslim day of worship, when there are mass anti-American street demonstrations following afternoon prayers.

Some Christians have been afraid to leave their enclaves to go to work and, according to the *Washington Times*, have been relying on the church for meals. Many are also afraid to attend worship services for fear that they, too, will be attacked.

India's Christian leaders brace for anti-caste rally

Alex Buchan

NEW DELHI (Compass) — Christian leaders who planned to attend a large anti-caste system "conversion" rally in New Delhi on November 4, 2001, were bracing for a Hindu extremist backlash.

Indian Christian leaders were invited to participate in the political gathering organized by some of India's Buddhists. The goal of the rally's organizers was to bring one million Dalits — those languishing at the bottom of India's caste system — into New Delhi to convert en masse to Buddhism as a protest against Hinduism as a basis for state oppression.

According to some observers, the rally may draw the ire of the Hindu extremist government.

Prepared for the worst

"We do not know what will happen on this day, but we are prepared for the worst," said Rev. Richard Howell, president of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (EFI). "I have formed a committee of five Christians, and if one of us gets arrested, we are all going to jail together."

Several Christian leaders are also annoyed at what they term the "ludicrous hype" of some mission agencies claiming that the event would be instrumental in bringing "300 million Dalits to Christ." According to an EFI insider, "Some of the publicity would lead one to believe a million people were all coming to Delhi to convert to Christianity on the 4th, and this exaggerated nonsense could draw persecution down on Christians again."

Converting to Buddism, not Christianity

"For one thing, it won't be a million coming on the day — probably more like 100,000," said Dr. John Dayal, secretary general of the All India Christian Council. "For another, they are converting to Buddhism on the 4th, not Christianity. Also, Christian leaders have been invited to attend as guests and spread the word, but we are attending as an act of solidarity with the anti-caste message of the rally — it is not primarily about evangelism that day."

Yet the rally was significant.

"It is the first public protest that Hinduism has failed as a political system. ... It has massive implications," Dayal said. Howell added, "What the Dalits are saying to the Christians is, 'Stand with us, and oppose the oppressive caste system perpetuated by Hinduism.'"

The rally is the creation of Ram Raj, a civil servant from a Dalit background, who converted to Buddhism as a means of protesting the caste system. Raj has publicly called on the Christians of India to stop supporting the caste system by educating the Hindu elite in their schools. He wants the Dalits to exercise their freedom of religion by leaving Hinduism and choosing another religion, and thus bring the caste system down.

60 per cent of Dalits are Christians

Sixty per cent of India's 50 million Christians are from a Dalit background. The word "Dalit," meaning "oppressed," refers to the so-called "scheduled castes," or untouchables, who are so low they are in fact outside the caste system. Dalits comprise about 15 per cent of India's population, or 150 million people. But the word "Dalit" can also be used more broadly to include the so-called "scheduled tribes" — tribals who are also outside the caste system (eight per cent of the population) — as well as some of the "other backward castes," who constitute 40 per cent of the population. Depending on the definition, the number of Dalits could range from 150 to 400 million.

According to an All India Christian Council expert, the country's Hindu leadership does not see a mass conversion (to Buddhism) rally as a threat, "because Hindu leaders consider Buddhism a sect of Hinduism." But should mass conversions of Dalits to Christianity take place, it would be a different matter.

Dayal has documented 450 cases of anti-Christian violence and evidence of 36 Christians killed for their faith in the past two years in India. Rev. Howell says the actual death toll may be more than 100. This has been mostly at the hands of Hindu extremists.

Thus far, India's media avoided any reference to the rally, and some feel the government may resort to issuing a public order to prevent the rally from occurring. There were also concerns that Hindu extremists from the governing Bharatiya Janatha Party would engineer some kind of violence on November 4 in order to get such rallies banned in the future.

(For a divergent view, see related news story on page 8.)

More than 100 killed as anti-U.S. protesters turn against Christians in Nigeria

(Religion Today) Between 100 and 200 are reported to have been killed in Muslim/Christian riots in Kano, northern Nigeria, Oct. 12-14, as anti-U.S. protesters turned on Kano's Christian minority during demonstrations.

According to the Barnabas Fund, the protest began peacefully after Friday prayers. However, soon Muslim youths were throwing stones at police, shouting, "God is Great" and setting fire to cars and churches. The citizens of the majority-Christian suburb of Sabon Gari erected barricades of burning tires in an attempt to keep the rioters out.

Two days of riots between Muslim and Christian youths ensued, in which hundreds were injured, and some 18,000, mainly Christians, fled to military and police buildings frantically seeking protection from the violent mobs. The death toll is probably much higher than the reported figure of 100 to 200, reports the Barnabas Fund. Houses, shops, vehicles, businesses and at least four churches and four mosques were all gutted by flames. More than 16,000 have been made homeless.

According to the Barnabas Fund, tensions between Muslims and Christians in northern Nigeria have been particularly high since 1999 when the first of a dozen Muslim-majority states in the North announced plans to implement full Islamic Shari'ah law. Christian minorities remain bitterly opposed. In February and May last year more than 1,200 were killed in Kaduna as tensions led to savage riots. Another 500 were killed in further clashes in Jos last month.

Theology

How we relate the Gospel to the world (transformationalist emphasis)

This fourth and final instalment on Reformed identity is taken from the revived denominational plan produced by the Christian Reformed Church head office in Grand Rapids, Mich.

CC FILES

One can see the fruit of the "already now" kingdom concept in ministries throughout the CRC, such as Christian colleges and schools across the U.S. and Canada. Above: The King's University College in Edmonton.

In this emphasis, Reformed refers to a certain view of the relationship of Christianity to culture, to a world-and-life view. The question for transformationalists is "How do Christians relate to the culture around them?" More specifically, how do Christians promote the Lordship of Christ in culture and society? How does the church address the gospel to the world around it and avoid the isolationism that so often has characterized the church? Six words or phrases help in understanding this dimension of being Reformed.

11. Jesus is Lord (Phil. 2:11)

These words, of course, come straight from the Bible. Paul concludes that great hymn of praise to Christ, "At the name of Jesus every knee should bend ... and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:11) Another biblical phrase that Reformed Christians use to make the same point is "Our God reigns."

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation, who says to Zion, 'Your God reigns'" (Isa. 52:7).

This affirmation that Jesus is Lord takes on particular significance in the modern world where we are plagued by *dualism*, the devastating split between the sacred and the secular. The secular worldview, which is the air one breathes today in North America, would have Christians believe that the world is really split in two, split between the *sacred* and the *secular*. It's fine for Christians to have their little Jesus in their little sacred world. But whatever claims Christians make about Jesus apply only to that little world called "the sacred."

When Reformed Christians hear such sacred/secular talk, they remember the words of Jesus: "All authority on heaven and on earth has been given to me," (Matt. 28:18) and the teaching of Paul that God "raised [Christ] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come." (Eph. 1:20-21)

Under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper, Reformed Christians strongly reject this sacred/secular dualism and declare that Jesus is Lord of all things. If the most well-known passage of the Heidelberg Catechism is Q&A 1 ("What is your only comfort in life and death? That I belong ..."), then the most well-known quotation of Abraham Kuyper is, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry: 'Mine!'"

12. Kingdom (Matthew 6:10)

The concept of Christ's lordship over all things is closely related to the biblical and Reformed emphasis upon the kingdom of God. Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe the good news." (Mark 1:14-15) Jesus taught many parables of the kingdom. Jesus taught Christians to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10)

The kingdom of God is the rule of God over all things. God is king. He is sovereign. He reigns. God always has ruled, but his rule has been vindicated and established once and for all in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (Col. 1:15-20; Eph. 1:15-23)

The kingdom is both a present and a future reality. It is "already now" and "not yet." Jesus said the kingdom is at hand; he also prayed for the kingdom to come.

One can see the fruit of this "already now" kingdom concept in ministries throughout the CRC. The list below is only a small sample of such kingdom endeavors:

- Christian colleges and Christian schools across the U.S. and Canada;
- Elim Christian School, for children with physical and mental disabilities in Chicago;
- Citizens for Public Justice in Toronto;
- Cary Christian Center, a community development association near Jackson, Mississippi;
- Center for Public Justice in Washington, D.C.;
- Beginnings Counseling and Adoption Services of Ontario;
- Pine Rest Christian Hospital of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

These are all kingdom endeavors. These institutions are bigger than the church, God's gathered people. They are the fruit of Christ's reign in the world. They are part of that new order of peace, justice, and healing that Christ has ushered in.

Christians live in hope because the kingdom is also "not yet." Christians look forward to not just the defeat but the banishment of Satan, to Christ's glorious return, and to a new heaven and the new earth, where there will be no more tears or brokenness or death, and where at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Closely related to an emphasis upon the kingdom is a commitment to seek justice in society. Many passages of Scripture call for Christians to seek justice, but none is more eloquent than Micah's call to Israel:

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness
and to walk humbly with your God?" (Mic. 6:8)

It follows from an emphasis upon the Lordship of Christ and the kingdom of God that Reformed Christians would be strong promoters of involvement in the broader society. And *justice* is generally what Christians seek as they work in these broader areas. Theologians and philosophers talk about the relationship between love and justice. Generally speaking, Christians construe God's call to *love* as applying to the personal relationships Christians have with people within the communities in which they live; whereas *justice* is something that Christians can seek for all people everywhere. Some examples of seeking justice:

- Fighting against laws or practices that cause racial discrimination or economic inequities.
- Promoting a proper balance of punishment, rehabilitation, and restoration in the criminal justice system.
- Promoting policies that alleviate human suffering, poverty, and hunger and that give hope and opportunity to the weaker members of society.

One important caveat is in order here. Biblical justice and the idea of justice as it is used in North American political discourse often have quite different overtones. Justice in North American society tends to focus upon personal rights, what one is entitled to, what is due an individual; whereas justice in the Bible, while it certainly includes a concern for personal rights rooted in the human person's exalted status as God's imagebearer, upholds the notions of righteousness, obedience to God's law, the restoration of relationships, the righting of wrongs which leads to righteousness and peace. Justice in the Bible is fully bound up with the kingdom of God and God's new order of righteousness and peace.

13. Word and deed (James 2:14-17)

"What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:14-17).

Just as a biblical understanding of the Christian life quickly leads to the church, so a biblical understanding of the church quickly leads to the "word and deed" nature of the church's mission. The church's mission has a *word* (proclamation) component; it also has a *deed* (action) component.

- The church proclaims Jesus is Lord *and* mentors those on public welfare.
- The church calls people to faith in Jesus Christ *and* helps refugees resettle.
- The church builds the body of believers *and* promotes justice in society.
- The church has elders *and* deacons.

Word and deed go together in the Christian life and in the church's ministry. The church cannot divide the ministry of word and deed, and it certainly cannot choose between them.

14. The cultural mandate (Genesis 1:27-28)

"Cultural mandate" is a term one hears frequently in Kuyperian, Reformed circles. The cultural mandate refers specifically to Genesis 1:27-28:

"So God created humankind in

his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

This is a mandate, a job description that God gave Adam and Eve at the very beginning of the world in the Garden of Eden. God gave Adam and Eve a position of dominion over the whole earth, a position that included the power to name, which, in significant ways, is the power to create. Human beings rule the world with God!

"You have made them a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet" (Ps. 8:5-6).

The point here is not that human beings are in control and can do anything they want. The point is not that people can dominate and exploit. It's quite the opposite. Human beings are appointed stewards; they are responsible to make the most out of this great world God has created. Human beings are builders, designers, creators!

The cultural mandate accompanies a strong emphasis upon creation. One of the things that flows directly from a strong doctrine of creation and the cultural mandate is an appreciation of science. Reformed Christians don't have a deep suspicion of science (or of the rest of learning, for that matter) the way some Christians do. God has revealed himself through two books: the book of Scripture and the book of nature. Of the latter book, the psalmist says, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork." (Ps. 19:1) Science is a systematic way to "read" the book of nature. When the book of science appears to conflict with the book of Scripture, then Reformed Christians reread and study both books to see where they are misreading. For ultimately, these two books can't contradict each other since God is the author of both.

Environmental stewardship is another strong implication of the cultural mandate and its emphasis upon creation. "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it." (Ps. 24:1) Christians are to be caretakers of the earth and the environment. This world is not ours to do with as we please. It is God's world, and he has appointed human beings to be stewards, guardians, and caretakers.

15. Christian Education

(Proverbs 9:10)

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." (Prov. 9:10)

Reformed Christians share with all Christians a strong emphasis upon Christian education. Historically the CRC in particular has emphasized the importance of Christian education not only in home and church, but also in educational institutions—elementary, high school, college, and university. Because Christ is Lord of all of life, including all spheres of learning, all education must be God-centered. In this understanding of the integration of faith and learning, God should not be left out of education at any level.

The biblical mandate for Christian education, for integrating Christ into all facets of life and learning, perhaps can be seen most clearly and beautifully in Colossians 1:15-17:

"[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Therefore, the Christian schools started by Reformed Christians are built upon a positive vision: that learning is rooted in Christ. At the same time, they are not opposed to public education. As public citizens, Reformed Christians are typically very supportive of the local public education system; they support Christian schools *and* vote for school millages. Many CRC congregations have teachers and students in Christian schools *and* public schools. Though Christian schools sometimes have isolated the Christian school community from its broader community, such isolation is not the goal and in fact must be resisted at every turn. For all the world, not just the church, is God's; and God, in his common grace, cares for all people, even those who don't acknowledge him. Reformed Christians have strong convictions about Christ-centered education; they also have a strong interest in all people's well-being.

16. Christian Vocation

(Ephesians 4:1)

"Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called." (Eph. 4:1) The entire life of the Christian—not just Sunday and not just church life—is a divine vocation, a response to God's call to follow Christ. In a world where all things hold together in Christ, Christians offer every part of their lives—their time, their work, their giftedness, their creativity, their wealth, their recreation—to God as an offering of thanksgiving and obedience.

Many people who hear the word "Calvinist" immediately think of "the Calvinist work ethic," an ethic of working hard, working honestly, and taking pride in one's work. That work ethic is rooted in the Calvinist conviction that all human work—whether one calls it a job, a career, or a calling, whether it is high-powered or simple, high-paying or non-paying—is a response to God's call and is part of fulfilling God's mandate to rule the earth and Christ's command to follow him. Beyond our daily work, this all-embracing understanding of God's *call* upon our lives produces strong and conscientious kingdom servants in business, professions, labor, homemaking, civic community organizations, volunteer organizations, education, science, industry, farming, and government. This emphasis upon Christian vocation is one of the reasons the CRC has had a special love for Christian liberal arts education in which every area of learning, from philosophy to physics, biology to business, is a response to God's call. This healthy sense of Christian vocation also fosters a strong sense of stewardship — a commitment to use wisely the time, talents, resources, and wealth that God has entrusted to us.

An inappropriate alliance?

The terrorists who snuffed out six thousand lives on September 11th were promised paradise upon their death. Since then, Osama Bin Laden has encouraged the Afghan people to rise up against the West and fight evil "in the name of Allah."

Interpreting conflict, international or otherwise, in spiritual or theological terms is not new. Much of the history of Christianity is interwoven with the political and cultural development of western Europe. The Crusades, the Inquisitions and a variety of historical European conflicts all have taken place to some extent "in the name of God." A simplistic spiritual interpretation of complex political and cultural phenomenons.

An alliance with God

We do the same in our personal lives.

Tom has been discontent in his marriage for quite some time. He is tired of ongoing conflict between himself and his wife. He believes he needs some space. He has been married for five years and became a Christian three years ago. He wants to do what is right.

He prays about it. Still, his thoughts turn to leaving his wife. After some struggle he informs her of his plans. She is horrified and begs him to reconsider. He tells her God has given him the peace he needs to do this.

We align ourselves with God when we think we need more weight to our opinion or argument. Ironically, however, when we habitually use this pattern of relating we short-circuit our spiritual and emotional development.

In the case of Tom, it may be helpful for him to have a better understanding of the conflicts he is having with his wife. He needs to ask the following questions: What are the conflicts about? What has he tried so far to solve the issues? What comes up for him when he is in the middle of the conflict? What does that remind him of? What troubles him about that? How does he usually react when he experiences conflict? And — how could he act differently? He also needs to ask himself questions regarding marital commitment as well as how he comes to understand the will of God for his life.

Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

Making commitment to change difficult

Processing these kinds of questions and making a commitment to change is often *more difficult* than easing God into an inappropriate alliance. However, by going *through* this process we will mature emotionally and spiritually as we ask for God's guidance and care during the journey of self-discovery.

Finding the will of God for various aspects of our lives is not easy. Some of us stress the experiential aspect of our faith. Others emphasize the rational or intellectual side. We, however, need a balance. Most of all, we need a good understanding of who God is as He reveals Himself through the Scriptures.

Arlene Van Hove is a psychotherapist with Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.

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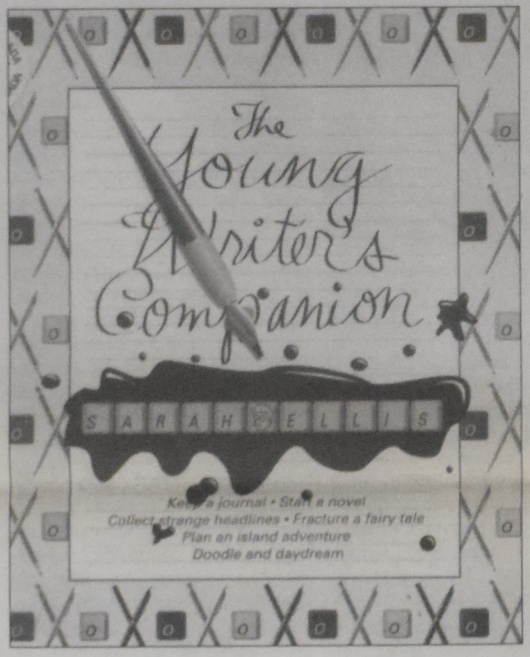
Book Reviews

Empowering and enabling young writers and illustrators

Collected and reviewed by Jeanette Romkema

People often ask me, "When are you going to write your own children's book?" My answer is usually, "Oh, I'm working on it." When they probe further about what I am writing I explain that ideas are always running through my mind. Having ideas is not the problem but time is. This is true for all of us; as long as we are living we are part of stories. Some of us may be better writers or artists than others, I may have developed a better technique of recording my ideas and images than you, but we all have stories. This is a collection of books that offers tools for putting these on paper. They celebrate our stories, and motivate young and old to share them.


The Young Writer's Companion
SARAH ELLIS
Keep a journal • Start a novel
Collect strange headlines • Fracture a fairy tale
Plan an island adventure
Doodle and daydream

The Young Writer's Companion

Written by Sarah Ellis, illustrated by Juan Fitzherbert

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 1999
How-to book for all elementary grades.
ISBN 0-88899-411-7, 128pp sbk

"Everyone who plays, daydreams, reads, thinks, listens and talks has ideas all the time. *The Young Writer's Companion* gives you some suggestions … on how to grab those ideas as they fly by." The award-winning author Sarah Ellis provides more than one hundred blank journal pages interspersed with story starters, writing tasks, interesting trivia about known authors, motivational book lists, and inspirational quotes. Although this book does not look at the mechanics of writing it is a fun tool for focusing on collecting and stimulating ideas. Great to doodle in, record one's thoughts and be encouraged.

From Reader to Writer: teaching writing through classic children's books

Written by Sarah Ellis

Toronto: Groundwood Books, 2000
Non-fiction chapter book for educators (middle–senior elementary grades).
ISBN 0-88899-372-2, 176pp hbk

From Reader to Writer is a guide for those working with young writers that uses modern and classic children's books to stimulate and inform. By offering a close look at authors including Beatrix Potter, C. S. Lewis, Lucy M. Montgomery, Virginia Hamilton and J. R. R. Tolkien, and describing what they most liked to read as a child, a launch pad is created for the imagination of young writers and illustrators. While children journey through tasks of comparison, rewriting, drawing, enacting and designing, skills in creative writing and thinking are developed. Exclusively containing written text this book offers in-depth descriptions, project development and topical analysis for exciting work. A unique resource for educators.

Talking With Artists: volume two

Written by Pat Cummings

New York: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 1995
Biography book for elementary and older grades; teachers.
ISBN 0-689-80310-9, 96pp hbk

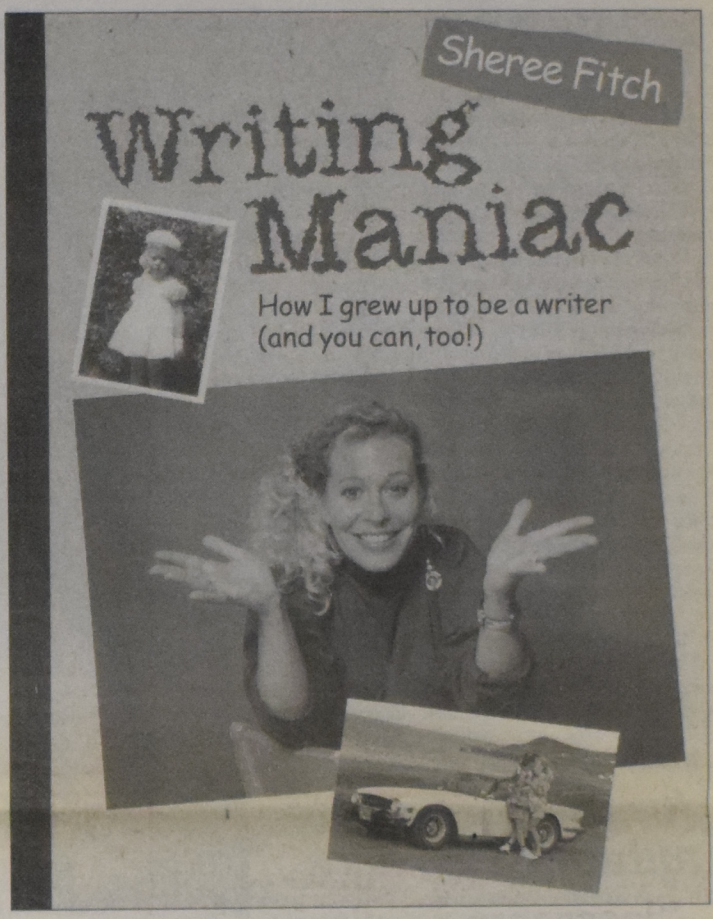
This second volume of *Talking With Artists* introduces the reader to thirteen internationally celebrated artists and offers a peek at how they illustrate picture books. While finding out about their past and present lives, color photographs of the artist are also shared along with images of his/her work space, and illustrations from various times in his/her life. The high quality of paper used, the well-designed pages, the authentic stories, the personal images and information, and the quality of artists chosen, make this a remarkable book. Secret techniques are revealed, unknown facts are shared, transformative events are detailed and a variety of approaches are explored. A MUST for all literature libraries.

Writing Maniac: how I grew up to be a writer (and you can, too!)

Written by Sheree Fitch

Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 2000
Autobiography book for elementary and junior grades.
ISBN 1-55138-121-4, 96pp sbk

Widely acclaimed author Sheree Fitch has briefly ventured away from her poetry to offer tools for children interested in learning how to write and publish writing. *Writing Maniac* is written as a type of journal with her personal narrative paralleled by easy-to-read commentary and writing activities, enhanced by insightful statements in the margins. It is organized into three main chapters: 1. *How I Grew Up to Be a Writer;* 2. *Ideas, Here, There, and Everywhere;* and, 3. *Being a Writing Maniac*, making this more than just an autobiography by a children's book author. This interactive book offers inspirational idea, practical advice, personal stories, insightful tips, family photographs, motivational tasks, and honest testimony for eager young (and not-so-young) writers. A fantastic classroom resource for teachers and students, and a useful family guide to starting a writing project.



The Storymakers: illustrating children's books

Compiled by The Canadian Children's Book Centre

Markham, ON: Pembroke, 1999
Biography book.
ISBN 1-55138-107-9 159pp sbk

Seventy-two artists describe their work, life's journey, sources of inspiration, technique for working and tips for young artists in this collection of Canadian children's picture book illustrators. Each two-page narrative offers a black & white photograph of the artist and a sample page of a published book, along with answers to almost twenty personal questions. Awards received and books published are listed while also including some information "nobody knew about me". An invaluable reference book for children and adults published by The Canadian Children's Book Centre which promotes and encourages the reading, writing, and illustrating of Canadian children's books.

Writing Your Best Picture Book Ever

Written by Kathy Stinson, illustrated by Alan & Lea Daniel

Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1994
How-to book for grades three and older.
ISBN 1-55138-028-5, 32pp sbk

Writing Your Best Picture Book Ever offers a concise easy-to-read explanation of the mechanics of writing. The young writer is taken from the idea stage to choosing the characters to composing a first draft to checking for clarity

and pacing. Many helpful hints are offered on choosing a title, writing a dedication, and deciding on how to publish it as well as getting people to proof read your work. Water colors of whimsical cartoon characters on each page help make this information book more engaging and offer some comical relief from this otherwise serious study of making a picture book. Due to its simplicity and playful presentation style, this is a great classroom resource.

Helping Kids Draw & Write Picture Books

Written by Emily Hearn, illustrated by Mark Thurman

Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1990
How-to book for educators (elementary and up).
ISBN 0-921217-1, 64pp

This step-by-step book is a practice guide to assist educators in walking students through the writing process. Including informative line drawings *Helping Kids Draw & Write Picture Books* is organized in *eight* "stages": 1. *Reading Picture Books as Stimulus*; 2. *Ten Minutes for Story Collaboration*; 3. *Storyboarding the Plot*; 4. *Book Mock-up*; 5. *Full-Color Book*; 6. *Writing the Story*; 7. *Finishing Touches*; and, 8. *Binding and Sharing*. Hearn and Thurman, much like in their over-sized book *Illustration Ideas for Creating Picture Books* (listed below), offer helpful ideas on illustrating books including visual examples of different techniques of drawing. Although this book does not contain the depth or breadth of information on the writing process as do most of the other information books reviewed in this collection, it is a concise easy-to-read how-to book for writing a picture book. The tips on producing the **visual text** make this a unique addition to any collection.

The Ultimate Guide to Classroom Publishing

Written & illustrated by Judy Green

Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers, 1999
How-to book for elementary and up.
ISBN 1-55138-112-5, 152 pp sbk

Whether you are planning a writing project in your home or classroom, need ideas for displaying student's work in your school, or want to know how to organize a writers conference in your community, *The Ultimate Guide to Classroom Publishing* has much to offer. Including almost no visual text the fifteen written chapters in this book hold a rich collection of inspirational ideas for teachers and students, insightful plans for classroom publishing, helpful tips for inviting an author or illustrator to a school, creative ideas for getting parents involved in a writing program, and much more. From the practical, to the playful, to the sophisticated Green's passion and enjoyment of writing is felt on every page of this book. A highly recommended resource.

Other books on the topic:

- ***Canadian Student Writer's Guide*** **by C. Donaldson (Gage 2000) - Grade 5 & up**
- ***How Writers Work: Finding a Process That Works for You*** **by R. Fletcher (Harper Trophy 2000) - Grades 3-8**
- ***Illustration Ideas for Creating Picture Books*** **by M. Thurman & E. Hearn (Pembroke 1990) – all ages**
- ***Kids Write Right!: What You Need to Be a Writing Powerhouse*** **by J. Venolia (Tricycle Press 2000) - Grade 6 & up**
- ***Putting it in Writing*** **by S. Otfinoski (Scholastic 1993) – Grade 4 & up**
- ***Write Now! How to Turn Your Ideas into Great Stories*** **by K. Bradford (Scholastic 1996)**
- ***Writing With Style*** **by S. Young (Scholastic 1997) – Grade 4 & up**

Expanding my horizons

Intangible Things
Heidi VanDerSlikke

Whenever I embark on a course of study, my husband gets an education. For one thing he learns to look after supper at least once a week. (The local restaurants have benefited greatly from my pursuit of knowledge.) He learns to put up with my compulsive preparation for exams, and my obsession with producing the ultimate essay. (I prefer to think of this as "being focused.") But most of all, he learns to expect that any given conversation may, at any time, turn to whatever subject I'm dealing with in my studies.

This fall my one and only course is philosophy. Since I'm only taking one course, I'm studying it rather intensely. I look at the world through philosophical glasses. I ask Jack questions like, "If a tree falls on a deserted island and there's absolutely no one around to hear it, does it make a noise?" Rarely at a loss for words, and having read more than his fair share of R. C. Sproul, he replies, "I don't know. But, if a man makes a statement and there's no woman around to correct him, is he still wrong?"

My mother always wonders why I inflict all this work upon myself. She was particularly puzzled as to why I would want to study philosophy. I glibly answered, "To find out where all of your crazy ideas come from." She laughed, as well she should have. I was joking and intended no disrespect. However, my mother is a humanist and, in truth, by studying philosophy I really do learn where some of her most influential ideas come from. Some of these concepts are so pervasive to our culture that I never even considered them as distinct ideas before. They were always more like a way of life. As such, I never thought to question their origin or challenge their validity, except where they conflicted directly with my Christian faith.

DETAIL OF *SCHOOL OF ATHENS* (1510-11); THE VATICAN, ROME (SCALA/ART RESOURCE)

Plato (left) and Aristotle, as depicted by the painter Raphael.

The most important questions

That's where philosophy comes in. My textbook defines it as "the attempt to think rationally and critically about the most important questions." Many people consider philosophy a waste of time, a "trip around the block to get next door" as it were. Even Christians get their guards up when they hear the word, which can also be defined as "a love of wisdom." Paul's warning not to be "taken captive by hollow and deceptive philosophies," (Col. 2:8), comes readily to mind. But Paul was responding specifically to teachings which threatened to lead God's people astray. As C. S. Lewis points out, "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."

Plato referred to philosophy as a "silent dialogue between the soul and itself." I like that. When I read of Descartes eliminating everything about which he had any doubt and the monumental significance of being left with, "I think, therefore I am," I can relate. When Augustine picks up where Plato left off, or Aquinas augments the ideas of Aristotle, I am filled with admiration for the great minds of history, as well as gratitude for the God who created them.

'The handmaid of theology'

I now understand why philosophy has been called "the handmaid of theology." What I have learned most clearly so far in this course is *what I believe*. In reading the debates over knowledge, metaphysics, ethics, mind and matter, I am struck time and time again by the way in which my God answers all of these issues. Without the matrix of Christianity, I would probably be dizzy to the point of intellectual nausea by now. But with the Triune God as the foundational reality, I can navigate quite nicely through this sea of ideas.

My brother's standard greeting used to be, "So what do you know for sure?" (Turns out this is one of the big philosophical questions.) I usually answered, "Not much, really." Things haven't changed much. But isn't it grand that there's always more to discover? Registration forms for the winter semester are out now. It's time to make course selections for January. So many courses. So little time. I wonder what Jack wants to learn about next.

Heidi VanDerSlikke thinks and exists in Harriston, Ont.

Analysis

Probing the roots of terror: Islam and radical Islamism

David T. Koyzis

It hardly needs saying that the events of September 11 have shocked the world. In the wake of that day's terrorist attacks, Westerners have been trying, perhaps hurriedly and belatedly, to come to grips with the phenomenon animating them, namely, what has variously been labelled fundamentalist Islam, radical Islam or Islamism. Many of us have wondered whether Islam is an intrinsically violent religion or whether the terrorists have "hijacked" (as some have aptly put it) a particularly ancient and honorable monotheistic faith. Many have further pondered the best way to address terrorism from a policy perspective.

FRANK SPOONER PICTURES

Muslims pray at the Islamic Cultural Centre in Copenhagen.

Hijacking Islam?

In 1993 Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington wrote a now-famous *Foreign Affairs* article titled, "The Clash of Civilizations," in which he argued that, after the end of the cold war, the world is increasingly divided along the ancient lines separating its several religiously-based civilizations. For the foreseeable future, chronic conflicts will likely arise in regions where two civilizations rub shoulders uneasily, as in the Balkans, North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. In contrast to some who see an increasingly westernized and modernized world, Huntington asserts that the acceptance of western technology by non-western regions is actually enhancing the ability of their residents to assert their own cultural and religious peculiarities, even against the west itself. In short, Islam is not becoming any less Islamic for having adopted western technology. Furthermore, according to Huntington, a tallying up of the major conflicts in the world today reveals that Islamic civilization has "bloody borders."

All but unusable

The problem with Huntington's approach is that, while it offers a plausible explanation for many of today's intractable conflicts, it is all but unusable as a source of foreign policy. By contrast, U.S. President George W. Bush must argue, at every conceivable turn, that Islam is a peaceful religion. He could hardly do otherwise at the risk of antagonizing one billion people worldwide and millions in his own country.

To what extent, then, do Osama bin Laden, Al-Qaeda and their followers accurately represent Islam? This is not easy to determine because, like Christianity and Judaism, Islam itself does not speak with a single voice. The two main branches of Islam, Sunni and Shia, are themselves divided into various strains, each of which has its own unique emphases and approaches. As one observer has put it, Islam has no papacy. There is no magisterium to pronounce on what is truly Islamic and what is not.

Those western observers standing in the secular liberal tradition, broadly understood, tend to argue that the problem is with religion in general, particularly when followers try to bring their beliefs into the public sphere. A glance at the editorial pages of a major daily newspaper will yield a good number of opinion pieces following this line of reasoning. Often bin Laden is mentioned in the same breath with the likes of Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson. They are all of one piece and dangerous, because there is no possibility of compromise with those believing God is on their side.

Others argue that the problem lies with Islam in particular rather than with religion in general. Charles Colson, in his Breakpoint commentaries, recently had a series on the worldview and ideology of Islam, finding them wanting from a biblically Christian standpoint. The one hope he sees is for Christians to continue witnessing to their faith in love to their Muslim neighbors, while being ever vigilant as to the political consequences of Islam's teachings, particularly with respect to tolerance of non-Muslims. Yet Colson's musings are not a prescription for public policy, and he would likely not claim them to be.

Small, fanatical minority

Cleveland State University law professor David Forte believes that the Islamist radicals are a small fanatical minority of the Muslim world and that they are violating the tenets of their own religion, as taught in the Koran and the other sources of Muslim teachings. President Bush has apparently been favorably impressed by Forte's arguments, according to one source. On the other hand, Daniel Pipes, editor of *Middle East Quarterly*, agrees that the radical Islamists have hijacked Islam, but he believes that their sympathizers, among otherwise moderate Muslims, are too numerous to be dismissed so easily. Yet both Forte and Pipes agree that Islamists have ideologized Islam in much the same way that fascists and Marxists-Leninists ideologized a post-Christian Western tradition in Europe and elsewhere. Furthermore, Pipes argues that the leaders among the Islamists are more westernized than they would have us believe and are even importing such Marxist categories as oppression and alienation into an Islamic worldview where they do not really fit. Yet they know how to manipulate the resentments of Muslims against their own corrupt régimes and against a United States they see as their sponsor.

Policy approaches

What then is the best way to combat Islamist terrorism? The answer to this depends which account one accepts of the relationship between Islam and the terrorists. Some hold that the West bears a certain degree of culpability for encouraging, or at least doing nothing to alleviate, the roots of terrorism.

By "roots" is usually meant the social and economic conditions in which a small élite holds wealth and political power while the vast majority live in poverty. The assumption of most holding to this view is that politics is largely driven by economics. Thus if we could only manage to increase foreign aid to the people of these regions, their lives would perhaps improve, the young would have meaningful jobs instead of becoming fodder for revolutionary movements, and something approaching western-style constitutional democracy might take hold.

While there may be something to be said for this point of view, it cannot explain how an Osama bin Laden, who has never known poverty and is awash in untold wealth, would so easily turn on his former benefactors, including the Saudi government and the United States, and bring himself to commit cold-blooded murder on so vast a scale. After all, if the major problems in the Middle East and Central Asia are principally economic, then why wouldn't a bin Laden use his huge financial resources to alleviate suffering at home rather than to kill thousands of innocents so far away? Something else is clearly at work.

Writing in 1990 in *Atlantic*

Continued on page 15...

The basics of Islam

David T. Koyzis

The word *islam* means "submission" or "surrender" in Arabic. Muslims believe that the whole of their lives must be lived in submission to the will of God. Among the sources of Islamic teachings are the Koran, the written record of God's revelations to Mohammed (c. 570-632); the *Hadith*, or the traditions concerning the sayings and deeds of Mohammed ; and the consensus of Koranic scholars. There are five pillars of Islam:

1) The *shahada*, or the testimony of faith, which consists of the following creedal statement: "There is no god but God (*Allah*), and Mohammed is his prophet."

2) The *salat*, or ritual prayer, which occurs five-times-daily. At each time of prayer the *muezzin* issues a call for prayer, which all Muslims perform facing the holy city of Mecca. Such regular prayer finds its counterpart in Judaism (Psalm 119:148, 164) and in the canonical hours recited in Christian monasteries.

3) *Zakat*, or alms-giving to the poor, is required of all Muslims. The amount given usually amounts to 1/40th of a person's income.

4) *Sawm*, or fasting, takes place during the month of Ramadan. Except for the very young, all Muslims must not eat anything from sunup to sundown during this time.

5) The *hajj*, or the pilgrimage to Mecca, is required of all Muslims able to make the journey. About two million Muslims make the *hajj* every year, but only about 10 per cent of Muslims actually manage to do so in their lifetime.

Not quite a sixth pillar, the notorious *jihad* nevertheless exercises a substantial influence on the Muslim faithful. The word is usually translated as "holy war" and is sometimes employed as justification for the use of terror in the cause of Islam. But *jihad* actually means struggle in the sense of "effort" and is primarily applied to one's own effort to combat evil within the heart. *Jihad* may indeed necessitate waging a military war, but this is not its primary meaning.

News/Analysis

Anti-terrorism bill worries many

Margaret Dinsdale

The events of September 11, 2001 shook the world and created a climate of fear and suspicion, especially for Muslim-Canadians. In Canada and the United States, many have been targeted and harassed, as well as Sikhs and Hindus. A Hindu temple in Hamilton Ontario was burned to the ground in the mistaken belief that it was Muslim.

A shock for Muslims

For Muslims who call Canada their home, it is a "shock" that anyone in the name of any faith would take the lives of innocent people.

"These people hijacked my religion," says M. D. Khalid, senior economic advisor for Ontario Power Generation, treasurer for two schools run by the Islamic Society of North America, who has lived in Canada for 31 years. "They are not Muslim spokesmen. No hierarchy gave edicts to do this. It is just a number of people with wrong heads doing stupid things in the name of religion."

He has not personally been the subject of abuse, but Khalid recounted the time his wife, who wears a hejab or head scarf, went to a grocery store shortly after

CC FILES

Reinder Klein

September 11.

"I should have gone with her," he says. "While she was standing in line a woman behind her said to another woman, 'I don't like those people' while looking at my wife. The other woman said that who you are doesn't make any difference and started a friendly conversation with my wife. This woman said that she had a Muslim neighbor who hadn't left her apartment in three or four days and she found that to be awful."

While the threat of future terrorist attacks and the ongoing anthrax scare has dominated political agendas in the United States, Canada has been engaged in determining its own actions and guidelines most notably with the pending passing of Bill C-36, "An Act to amend the Criminal Code, the Official Secrets Act, the Canada Evidence Act, the Proceeds of Crime (Money Laundering) Act and other Acts, and to enact measures respecting the registration of charities, in order to combat terrorism" known also as the Anti-terrorism Act.

Bad for minorities

"This act is bad for minorities, especially for Muslims, because the police can pick up anybody and incarcerate them with no due legal process. This is from the dark ages," says M. D. Khalid. "We came to this country for the freedoms we enjoy here. We're not saying that there isn't the right to catch the culprits, but society has to rise above paranoia to do what's right and just."

Reinder Klein, co-ordinator of Church in Society for the Christian Reformed Church in Canada, agrees. Though the CRCC does not have an official stance in this matter, Klein expressed his personal thoughts and reservations about Bill C-36 and how it could

COURTESY BILL BLAIKIE

MP Bill Blaikie

infringe on personal rights.

"Any racism that comes to expression I find abhorrent," he said in an interview. "There was a time when anyone who wasn't white, blond and blue-eyed was looked down upon. It is tricky to legislate a stop to terrorism and at the same time maintain and protect the freedoms we enjoy."

Grave misgivings

One Member of Parliament who also has grave misgivings about the initial content of the bill is Bill Blaikie of the NDP, who is a member of the committee overseeing the current hearings before its passage.

"One of the problems I have with this bill is the definition of terrorism," he said in an interview from his office in Ottawa. "A criminal act is deemed a terrorist one if it was done for political, religious or ideological reasons. A professor of law who just appeared before our committee said that this opens the door for someone to say that what they did was for pure greed or self-interest, so therefore they should be charged with a lesser count."

He sees an issue like this as "creating work for lawyers" but acknowledges that Canada is obligated to pass anti-terrorist legislation, because the United Nations Security Council has asked countries to have laws in place by early December. However he would like the bill to be uniquely Canadian.

Copycat version

"This bill is an identical copycat version of the British anti-terrorism legislation, which doesn't contain any sunset clauses like the United States bill does."

A sunset clause gives an aspect of a bill a time limit. Blaikie also wants to be reassured that it won't be used against any other protest or dissent, and wants parts of the bill dealing with privacy and access to information eliminated.

"I would like to see some of the more controversial provisions such as preventive arrest and the American-style grand jury idea 'sunseted' so we aren't stuck with them forever," he said, acknowledging that the introduction of witnesses to the committee proceedings have slowed the process somewhat. "We are now being more thorough with the bill and there now seems to be a willingness to sunset some clauses."

Effects of 'demonic' acts

John Tenyenhuis, the pastor of Rehoboth Fellowship church in Etobicoke, worries about the long-term effect the "demonic" acts of September 11 will have as well.

"For so long we have had a sense of security and peace in Canada," he said. "Here, people want to wreak vengeance because they've been hurt deeply by social policy, for example, but they do it by demonstrating. We cannot give in to the kind of hatred these terrorists have performed."

Blaikie said of his feelings on the day of the attacks: "I remember having the feeling that these actions would have enormous consequences that we are not yet really able to fathom."

Some of the legislation affected by the "Anti-terrorism Act" are the following:

- the Official Secrets Act,
- Security of Information Act,
- Canada Evidence Act,
- Proceeds of Crime Act,
- Access to Information Act,
- Canadian Human Rights Act,
- Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act,
- Corrections and Conditional Release Act,
- Federal Court Act,
- Firearms Act,
- National Defence Act,
- Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act,
- Privacy Act,
- Seized Property Management Act,
- United Nations Act.

Probing the roots of terror: Islam and radical Islamism

... continued from page 14

Monthly, Princeton historian Bernard Lewis attempted even then to uncover "The Roots of Muslim Rage." Ultimately he believes that the causes of the current conflict are to be found in Muslims' rejection of the twin threats of secularism and modernity, which they see emanating from the West in general and the United States in particular.

Brilliant contributions

Most Muslims are aware that their own civilization was once a single political entity covering a large territory extending from the Atlantic Ocean, including Spain and Morocco, to South Asia, including much of India. They are aware of its often brilliant contributions to philosophy and science (*algebra* is an Arabic word), and have never resigned themselves to its eclipse by a more powerful West. Pipes points out that some of the radical Islamists have a paradoxical obsession with all things western, immersing themselves in its literature, art and even popular culture, yet hating the West bitterly and plotting to destroy it.

Never having accepted the post-Christian Western notion of the separation of religion and politics, the Islamists strive to see the *Shariya*, Islam's legal code, implemented, not only in their own countries, but even in "unbelieving" Western countries where millions of Muslims have settled in recent decades. Some have suggested that bin Laden and Saddam Hussein alike see themselves as potential global leaders uniting all of humanity under their leadership in a new Islamic empire.

If this is true, then simply removing American troops from Saudi Arabia, dropping U.S. support for Israel and pushing for changes of régime in Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia will hardly assuage the anger of the radical Islamists, who will settle for nothing less than the ultimate supremacy of Islam over other civilizations, and even, according to terrorism expert Steven Emerson, making the U.S. into a Muslim country.

Fortunately, not all Muslims follow such an apocalyptic scenario, and millions have migrated to countries such as Canada precisely because they value the political freedom and democracy unavailable at home.

Bringing terrorists to justice will be no easy feat. Given the defiance of a number of governments in the region and their continued willingness to harbor the terrorists, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that some measure of coercive force will be required as deemed appropriate in specific circumstances.

Is the current military campaign in Afghanistan a proper response? Perhaps so, but great care needs to be taken both to avoid civilian casualties and to avoid further inflaming the passions of ordinary Muslims and thereby driving them into the Islamist camp. More than anything else, patience will needed in what is likely to be a protracted struggle against such a manifest evil.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer University College, Ancaster, Ontario.

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Book Review

Mouw revisits the concept of common grace

He shines in all that's fair: culture and common grace

Richard J. Mouw

Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, Mich., 2001, 101 pp.

Reviewed by Harry der Nederlanden

CHRISTIAN COURIER FILE PHOTOS (3)

Richard Mouw

Like most of those raised in Kuyperian homes, I was introduced to the idea that God's unmerited love toward his creatures and toward all people is much bigger, much more generous than just paying for our sins, although this is no little thing. God had purposes for his world and for his image bearers before they fell into sin, and that purpose too was driven by God's love. He sent his Son, after all, because he loved the world. He saves us to restore us to fellowship with him and to continue working out in us, also in our art, science and government, the great work that he began with us at the beginning.

All Christians are aware of receiving many good things that come from the creative energies of all sorts of human beings: music, medicine, democratic government, the rule of law, literature, the business corporation, indoor plumbing, and so on. We assume they are — somehow — no less gifts of God's favor than being saved unto eternal life in Christ Jesus. These things are a blessing to us and we receive them as demonstrations of God's grace. Since unbelievers enjoy these benefits as much as we do, we generally assume that they too are recipients of God's grace.

Can grace ever be common?

But there are Calvinists who deny this seemingly common sense observation. They deny that grace can ever be common, that is, dished out indiscriminately to all people. Why? It flows out of the Calvinist confession that grace is particular and irresistible. God is gracious to whom he chooses, that is, to his elect, and when he does shower his grace on us, although we are unworthy and dead in sin, that grace overcomes all our resistance and gives us new life in Christ. If grace overcomes the unbelief of all those to whom it comes, then a grace that is common would result in the salvation of all people. Clearly, the Bible teaches us that some persist in their unbelief. Therefore, some Calvinists conclude, there can be no such thing as common grace.

Those raised in the CRC know there have been heated and harsh debates on the topic of common grace, debates that have figured large in a couple of schisms. We're none too eager to venture back into the labyrinths of this debate, for there seems to be no easy way to resolve it. So we'd rather forget about it. Yet, most of us know in our bones that somehow or other God is good to everyone, and after the Fall that goodness can issue only from his grace.

How Christians relate their faith to culture

In his latest book, first given at Calvin as the Stob Lectures, Richard Mouw revisits the concept of common grace as important to how Christians relate their faith to culture. *He Shines in All That's Fair: Culture and Common Grace* is not addressed just to Calvinists but to the larger evangelical community in North America. Why should an evangelical audience be interested in this rehash of an old controversy that took place largely within Dutch Calvinism? Mouw points out that contemporary evangelicalism is experiencing a tension similar to that experienced by the CRC at the time the debates happened.

In the past the evangelical churches saw themselves as the faithful remnant in a hostile, and perhaps hell-bound, society and culture, called to remain separate and distinct. Today, however, evangelicals see themselves as the silent majority coming into its own, as the preserver and carrier of all that is wholesome in American society. They would agree with Kuyper that the Christian faith

Abraham Kuyper

(Kuyper said Calvinism) is the foundation and guarantor of liberty.

Evangelicals have emerged from their various ghettoes and are now well-educated, well-represented in all the academic disciplines, and eager to make their presence felt, not just in the political arena, but in all areas, including those once designated as "worldly", such as popular music and movies.

Experiencing same tension

Evangelicals today experience the same sort of tension between seeking to maintain their distinct identity as God's peculiar people and entering into common cause with unbelievers in making this a better, more peaceful and more just world. In several of his recent writings, Chuck Colson, too, has been extolling the virtues of the idea of common grace as a biblically responsible way to become engaged in our culture to transform it.

Mouw does not embrace the idea uncritically; in fact, he devotes considerable attention to Hoeksema's criticism of common grace as a threat to the church because it blurs the distinction between church and world. Henry Stob and Herman Dooyeweerd, however, have countered that the tension, or antithesis, is not between two classes of people — the elect and reprobate — but between two opposing spiritual principles — the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of man. Yet, Mouw wants to preserve the importance of the church as a distinctive community, joining Kuyper's stress on the need to maintain our uniqueness and separateness.

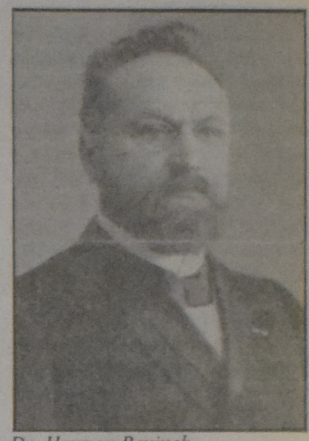
Nevertheless, Mouw also argues convincingly for a view of God that allows us to see him as taking delight in such common things as a healed marriage even between unbelievers. Here, he doesn't offer very sophisticated arguments, at least, none that would sway followers of Hoeksema or Schilder. But then Mouw takes his discussion into deep waters: he finds it necessary to rehearse the old dispute between the infra- and supralapsarians. Most of us will need a reminder what that was all about. Both camps agreed that all that happens in time, particularly the saving of the elect, was decided before the foundation of the world in the eternal counsel of God. One camp (the supras) reasoned that God decreed the salvation of the elect before the Fall, while the other (the infras) argued that the Fall had to logically precede the decree to save the fallen. Why does Mouw dust off this old debate? Because he wants to anchor his concept of common grace in the nature of God.

More than restraint of sin

With Kuyper, he wants to see the operation of common grace as more than just the restraint of sin so that the church can spread the gospel; it also includes the working of the Spirit in the lives of all men and women to lead them to fulfill their potential as image bearers of their Creator. "God also takes a positive interest in how unbelievers use their God-given talents to produce works of beauty and goodness," concludes Mouw. God isn't solely interested in saving the elect; he has other purposes as well. Infralapsarianism recognizes such a "psychic complexity" in God, contends Mouw, finding support in Herman Bavinck.

Common grace, suggests Mouw, provides a biblically responsible way for us to recognize a shared "substantive humanness" between believers and unbelievers and thus gives us an impetus to work together with all for the common good. An overemphasis on the separateness of the church tends to breed indifference to the public square and a narrow focus on the ministries of the church.

Mouw's treatment certainly won't convince the followers of Hoeksema or Schilder; most of it moves along a quite different track. Although I appreciate his retrieval of the theme of common grace and its importance for the Christian community's involvement in and appreciation of a culture in which we participate whether we like it or not, I'm not sure that it is necessary or desirable to drag us back into the mazes of the infra-supra debate. They were spawned much, I believe, by



Dr. Herman Bavinck

modes of reasoning that belong to a past era and that are better left behind. They sound archaic to our ears for a good reason.

Although I am convinced that election is a biblical teaching, I doubt whether either the infras or the supras do much to develop this mystery in a constructive way. I'm not sure that to project our logic into the mind of God does much to illuminate his eternal counsel, whether that was "before" time in our sense of order or just "before" in the sense of: so foundational to our understanding that we cannot go there. Adrio Koenig, in his discussion of God and history in *Here Am I*, warns us against contrasting eternity to time, with the first "before" and the second "after", for this prompts us to play off the action of God against the action of man.

God's covenant and purpose

The biblical idea of the covenanting God, however, does precisely the opposite; there the action of God makes room for the free acts of man. The God of the covenant is not the God whose acts before time empty ours of significance but fill ours with purpose by revealing his purpose in Christ, namely, to redeem our lives in their wholeness (not just souls) as well as his good creation. A glance back at Kuyper and Bavinck will show that they seldom discuss election or predestination without moving on to the covenant, for that is how God enlists us in his purposes in time.

But Mouw's book doesn't pretend to cover the topic; he has done us a good turn by inviting us to reflect on some themes that are central to our expression of faith far beyond the boundaries of personal sanctification. It is a call to sanctify culture and society in its totality.

Remembrance Day

World War II veterans reunited after 55 years

Stan de Jong

For some years now, my wife and I have worked for a Canadian agency which sends people out to homes where the husband or wife may be suffering from Alzheimer's or Parkinson's. Sometimes they are heart patients. Or old age has simply affected them in such a way that they need help. No, we are not certified nurses, but my wife and I did complete an intensive Alzheimer's Disease course.

Now, on a weekly basis, we spend one or two afternoons with our patients. As respite companions we then take the place of the usual caregiver. The responsibilities of those caregivers are many. When we arrive, they have an opportunity to get out of the house. But sometimes they're so tired they simply need to catch up on much-needed sleep. Others leave and visit friends or family, or they go shopping. When we are alone with our patients many conversations take place. Not always, but quite often we talk a lot together.

This story is about my patient whose name is Jack Alguire. Some time ago, while in Florida, he suffered a serious stroke, underwent a major operation and was then flown to a Toronto hospital. It took a while before he was allowed to go home to St. Catharines, Ont. But come home he did. Now he needs care and he really should not be left alone. When I arrive at his home, someone else leaves.

Jack is a retired engineer. During my talks with him I couldn't help but be impressed with all the different projects and developments he had been involved with.

It's not the first time I got a patient who's also a veteran of World War II. My first patient, Alec McCallum, was an officer on an English destroyer. He told me that in 1941 his ship was part of the British Navy task force that hunted and eventually sank the German battleship, the Bismarck, which at 45,000 tons was then the largest such ship in the world. I had read much about that historic battle.

His eyes filled with tears

When I mentioned the Hood Alec's eyes filled with tears. The Bismarck, somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean, had trained its guns so accurately on that British warship that it was literally blown out of the sea. It broke in half and sank in a few minutes. The Hood had a crew of 1,500. All of them died except for three sailors. Obviously, this still affected Alec greatly. I thought: how many of his friends went down with that ship?

Jack is my second patient. I quickly found out that during the last war he was with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). He was trained as a wireless gunner and graduated in Guelph, Ontario, during 1943. In Ancienne Lorette, Quebec, he received training as a navigator. Following a one-month course in battlefield survival training in Nova Scotia he arrived at that province's Greenwood Air Force Base. There, now known as Flight Officer Jack Alguire, he began to learn how to navigate on a Mosquito bomber.

SHIRLEY ALGUIRE

Jack Alguire and his wife, Shirley, visiting George Walker (left) at his Sarnia home.

His future pilot

At Greenwood he learned the identity of his future pilot, Flight Lieutenant George Walker. During 1943, George had been in North Africa at the time when Montgomery's forces were fighting it out with the Germans under Rommel. He was very experienced, having flown all sorts of aircraft all over the place.

When Jack started talking to me about George he became very emotional. With tears in his eyes, he said, "Stan, I wonder if he's still alive. We've gone through so much and we haven't seen each other for years!" We talked about that, but the only thing he could tell me was that George and his wife at one time lived in Sarnia, Ontario, the same city where my wife and I and the kids had lived at one time. That gave me an idea.

Sometime later that year we visited one of my wife's sisters in Sarnia. While there I found a telephone book. I noticed the book listed at least 20, and quite a few G. Walkers. Anyway, I just dialed a number, and, lo and behold, I hit the jackpot. I learned from Doris, George's wife, that he was doing fine, except that Alzheimer's disease slowed him down.

Then and there, I decided to drive to their home and visit them. They were very happy to hear that Jack and his wife, Shirley, were alright. They jumped from one subject to another and kept asking questions. George walked somewhat absent-mindedly through the house, but he knew what I was talking about. He went into the basement and came back with books and photos about the war years. I noticed a photo of Jack together with George. Jack was at least a head taller than George.

A few days later I was back in St. Catharines, Ontario, visiting Jack. Calmly and carefully I told him that I had spoken with the Walkers in Sarnia. His eyes lit up. I asked if he was up to talking with George on the telephone. That was fine, Jack said.

Talking together again

And that's how I got two World War II friends — who in the year 2000 did not know that the other was still alive — talking together on the phone. It was so moving that I removed myself for a while, not wanting to be in the way. Jack's face shone, he cried, he laughed, all at the same time. He asked George if he still remembered the call letters and number they used to identify themselves while on a mission. And after much shouting and crying, they agreed that the code they used was 'Carbine 644.'

The Alguires and the Walkers met in Sarnia that year. For the Alguires that was a trip of more than 600 kilometres. Will it ever happen again?

Looking back

Jack and George stayed together until the end of the war. On the 'Ile de France' they traveled across the ocean from Nova Scotia to New Glasgow, Scotland. From there they went to various English aerodromes. During November 1944 they flew first to Rosières (close to Paris) and later to Melsbroeck (close to Brussels). From there they flew all kinds of missions using the Mosquito aircraft.

There is room for only two people in a Mosquito bomber. George, as pilot, sat in front. Jack, the navigator, sat somewhere behind George, but a bit lower. A Mosquito bomber had two mighty Merlin motors, but the rest of the aircraft was made out of plywood. A factory in Toronto — the Havilland Aircraft Factory — assembled quite a few of them. You could take them apart. The pieces would be brought to England where they were put together again.

The Germans were scared silly of those fast, wooden Mosquitos. They were almost invisible on radar screens. Often they were painted black and flew at great speed (top speed: 600 km./hr.) just 100 to 200 metres above the ground. The plane could carry six heavy bombs, and the crew could shoot with six machine guns and four cannons. A Mosquito had a radius of about 2,500 kilometers. Sometimes they were used strictly for photo reconnaissance.

Jack showed me a whole pile of charts he had used in the war and explained a bit how navigating with so-called 'G lines' worked. If he followed those 'G lines' he would know more or less precisely where he was when he flew, for example, above the Netherlands or Germany. Crews of most other allied planes used those charts as well. Jack indicated on the charts where German anti-aircraft batteries were located. You tried to avoid them, he added dryly.

On the charts covering the north of Holland and Germany I very quickly noticed some familiar names. Names such as Assen, Groningen, Winschoten (where I lived during the war), Nieuwe Schans and the northern cities in Germany.

When I was a little boy of about ten years old, I often saw large fleets of bombers flying above Winschoten, my home town. It was fascinating to see, especially at night. I would stand on a flat roof behind the house and listen to the bombers above me. I could see the German searchlights switching on in the east. Were Jack and George in one of those planes flying high above my home?

Scary but exciting

For me, the war years were dark and scary, but also exciting. Once, on a clear day, an English attack plane came diving out of the sky right above my head. I heard later the Tommies were trying to wipe out a Gestapo nest close to my home. I'll never forget how all those spent cartridges came tumbling out of the sky next to me on our street, the Acacialaan. Not one hit me. I was fortunate.

George and Jack flew out of England, France, or Belgium to enemy targets in Germany and bombed such cities as Bremen, Bremerhaven, Kiel, Hamburg and Frankfurt. Much of Europe, especially Germany, was in ruins. But the allied forces fought a good cause. As far as the Nazis were concerned, the one thousand year Reich had just started. Imagine what would have happened had they won.

George, Jack and Alec did their duty. Years from now they will be virtually forgotten, as are so many already. We want to thank them, and all other war veterans, as well as all those who fought for freedom and lost their lives.

We honor them!

Postcript

During the summer of 2001, my wife and I visited the famous Cabot Trail in Nova Scotia. Traveling counterclockwise, from east to west, we arrived at a scenic viewpoint just north of Cheticamp, on the St. Lawrence side of the Trail. The view from this point is breathtaking. Situated nearby is a simple monument dedicated to those who gave their lives during World War II. The inscription on the plaque reads as follows:

"They will never know the beauty of the place, see the seasons change, enjoy nature's chorus. All we enjoy we owe to them, men and women who lie buried in the earth of foreign lands and in the seven seas. Dedicated to the memory of Canadians who died overseas in the service of their country and so preserved our heritage."

A Dutch version of this story will appear on a Dutch web site called **dideldom.com**, *where you will also find several stories by Herman de Jong.*

Nose for News

Bert Hielema

FEAR. CURIOUSLY, THE word has two totally different meanings: (1) it is "an unpleasant emotion caused by exposure to danger or expectation of pain;" (2) it also means: "show reverence towards." We have a lot of the first and not enough of the other, a lot of anxiety and little genuine piety.

There is a Dutch saying that people suffer most from the suffering they dread; in other words, the expectation of pain and suffering is worse than its realization. We have lived through the nervous nineties where clinical depression was already rampant long before 9/11, and since then clouds of dread have mushroomed.

All through the last decade, anxiety attacks have been the greatest factor in absenteeism in the work place. Now, with more job losses and the additional matter of infections willfully perpetrated by evil religious fanatics, dread has intensified. A new study shows that, also among those who have not lost their jobs or whose pay has not been cut, economic recessions cause a big decline in people's happiness, because fear is infectious. People start to worry about their own jobs, start to get edgy about possibly having less money to pay growing bills and start visualizing decreases in savings and are forced to postpone retirement. Such fretting may cause less immediate panic than anthrax, but is are far more likely to have an impact on life than that white powdery stuff that keeps the U.S. nation in suspense.

STRESS SELDOM COMES without distress. Our medical system is already overtaxed, and a further fright factor increases sickness even more, adds to waiting time, and feeds on fear, which is often irrational. In 1962, at a North Carolina textile factory, a worker reported being bitten by a poisonous insect and became sick. Within one week, 62 other workers claimed the same. The bug did not exist.

True, the world is a more worrisome place than before. After four decades of assuming that infectious diseases had vanished, we find ourselves besieged by microbes. Tuberculosis, nearly eradicated in the '70s, now claims millions of lives annually. Malaria, also once on the brink of extinction, now has more than 100 million victims each year. AIDS claims its victims also by the tens of millions. It was unknown prior to 1961.

The water we drink is often improperly purified, the air we breathe potentially lethal, the food we eat possibly poisonous. And then there are new diseases, such as Lasa, Ebola, and old viruses in new locations: hantavirus, yellow fever, dengue. So, no wonder that people are fearful. Cancer seems impossible to beat. And all the time the pressure on doctors and hospitals is growing while the population ages, which places additional strain on the healing agencies.

UNTIL 9/11, PEOPLE HAD great confidence in the magic of technology and the miracles of our wonderful economy, but when those planes were steered into the two tall buildings and thousands of deaths were caused by the melting steel and crumbling concrete, lots of people started to question whether the optimism generated by the New World Order and the New Economy that would 'grow forever' and bring prosperity to all, was built on false hope.

Uncertainty has gripped the nation. I hope that out of our mood of misgivings comes forth some real questioning. I hope that we will take issue with politicians who tell us that if we only spend, if we only fly to exotic faraway places, if we only go out and eat gourmet dinners and buy expensive presents and indulge ourselves, then the glorious pre-9/11 days will return as if nothing has happened.

BUT SOMETHING DID happen and something is still happening, something very scary, and the first thing we have to do is to wonder why this dreadful thing happened. Let me name some possibilities. It is possible that we have given the 'free market' the status of god. If that is the case we must confess that we were sacrificing to this idol our farmers, our farmlands, our communities, our forests, our wetlands, our prairies, our ecosystems and watersheds. We then also must acknowledge that we have accepted universal pollution and global warming as normal costs of doing business and admit that we have paid little or no attention to the frightening lot of most of the world's people, now so graphically displayed to us in Afghanistan and Pakistan, with their milling millions of dispossessed wanderers.

Now some of that uncertainty that affects 80 per cent of the world's people has come to us, spoiled North Americans, in a minute measure. The shock is all the more unpleasant because we had our eyes and ears closed and did not want to see this reality. Our booming economy has always depended on innovation, from one new invention to another, from still pictures, to movies, to speaking cinema to computers, to Internet and high speed communication via satellites. We never even dreamed that a new kind of war would turn our inventions of flying machines into explosive projectiles, steered by people whose sole aim was annihilation.

We did not anticipate that we might be trapped into the network of communications that would pursue us relentlessly everywhere we went, depriving us of spare time, privacy and family life. We never thought through the possibility that our weaponry and war knowledge that we marketed and taught to the world would become available to religious fanatics, whom we call terrorists, even though they simply practiced what we preached and provided. We believed with the power of faith that technology was always a power for good, that it could not serve evil, could not serve enemies, could not destroy what is good, our homes, our lives, our economy.

Joseph Tainter, in his book *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, points out that civilizations constantly require an expanding material base and continuous mobilization of resources, and that the trend always is toward higher levels of complexity. When times were simple, when in a hunter-gatherer society the members of a tribe experienced a resource shortage, they moved elsewhere. But we are committed to staying in one place and generating another level of control to solve our problems — a process that never ends.

TAXES NEVER GO DOWN. Information processing always becomes more dense. Bureaucracies grow. Waiting times become longer. We are in a never-ending spiral of increasing complexity and correspondingly higher costs and all this is accompanied by ever higher levels of anxiety. The recent event on September 11 has made matters even more complex: greater security measures, more military expenditures, higher cost for transportation, decreasing productivity and less freedom. At a certain point, says Tainter, collapse actually becomes economical.

If this is true, then we cannot exclude the possibility of a severe economic contraction, which may be already evident in apathy, fear and feelings of meaninglessness and loss of faith. If we are experiencing a culture that no longer believes in itself, if we also no longer believe in ourselves, we tend to make war to restore our faith in the system. Fighting is always a sign of insecurity. But this may backfire, as we have seen with Vietnam and, who knows, may be the case with our expedition into Afghanistan.

The Globe and Mail devoted two articles to the topic of fear and offered an easy formula to deal with it: exercise; share your feelings; take time for yourself; eat healthy; don't skip vacations; get enough sleep; help others; laughter is the best medicine; don't be afraid to ask for help.

THESE ARE GOOD TIPS but they don't deal with the larger issues, because we are not little islands, operating apart from the larger context: we all are caught up in the tangles of each others' lives, and thanks to our cable networks, which fill their 24 hours with continuous idle chatter, we all are fed a constant menu of doom and gloom, so everybody is prone to get a case of jitteritis.

Of course we can continue in the blind faith that 9/11 was an aberration, and, as true fanatics, redouble our efforts as if the world has not changed. But it has changed. We've had a wake-up call. The call says that we have to decentralize our world economy. The call says that we need to make sure that every nation and region has a measure of prosperity.

With the risk of sounding trite, I can say that we must have more fear, in the sense of more reverence. Reverence toward each other. Reverence for ourselves, our families, our community, our world and all that is in it. We must work out our salvation with fear and trembling. That is a biblical given. And this salvation starts with love: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear," said John in his first letter.

There is cause for justified fear in our society. Nobody need feel guilty about that. We had better be prepared for fearful happenings. Being ready for a dreadful event is one of the best defenses. Above all we must have faith that all things will work out for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. This follows a passage in Romans 8 about the groaning of creation and the pains we have to endure ourselves before the Lord returns. Maranatha.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont.

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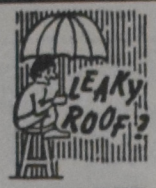

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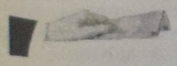

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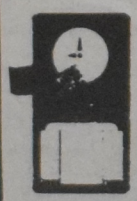

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Church Anniversary

The **50th Anniversary of Bethel CRC in Listowel,** Ontario, will be celebrated D.V. on December 8, 2001, with a breakfast, Open House and program evening. December 9, at 2:30 p.m. a special service. For more information, call Everdina Bender at **519-291-1349** or check our website:
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"Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations... May the favour of the Lord our God rest upon us." (Psalm 90:1,17)
Thank you for your love and care.
Grace & Dick Hockenberry — Diosd, Hungary
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18 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren
You are welcome at an Open House on Saturday, November 24, from 2 - 4 p.m. in the Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Hwy 7, Acton. Best wishes only, please.
Their address: R.R. 4, Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0

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We rejoice and praise our Lord, along with our parents, on the occasion of their 50 years of marriage together.
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John & Linda VanBenthem — Hagersville, Ont.
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Rob & Margaret Miedema — Hagersville, Ont.
Ashley, Kyle, Samantha
Jim & Anita Broekema — Brampton, Ont.
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Miscellaneous

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Anniversaries

Andy & Betsie Dieleman

November 17, 1951 - November 17, 2001
The family of
ANDY and BETSIE DIELEMAN
are pleased to announce the 50th wedding anniversary of Mom and Dad.
Come celebrate with us on Saturday, November 17, 2001 D.V. An Open House will be held at the Aylmer Christian Reformed Church from 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.
Best wishes from your children and grandchildren:
Adrian & Ruth Dieleman — Visalia, Calif.
David, Christopher, Joshua
Bob & Marion Dieleman — Woodstock, Ont.
Laura, Rachel, Andrew
The late Jim Dieleman and his wife Diane — Aylmer, Ont.
Jacqueline & Sid Salomons, Jaime-Lyn
Joanne & John Schaap — Coquitlam, B.C.
Allison, Lisa, Richard
Ria & Kerry Robertson — The Haghe, the Neth.
Diane (Dieleman) & Con VanGalen
Jackie, Steven, Hailey, Dylan and Kyrie

Surhuisterveen, Fr. St. Thomas, Ont.
1951 November 22 2001
"The eternal God is your dwelling place." (Deuteronomy 33:27a)
PETER and CORRY VENEMA (KIELSTRA)
With joy and thanks to God, we announce our parents' 50th wedding anniversary. We celebrated on a beautiful day in July. May God continue to keep you, Mom & Dad, in His loving care.
Charly & Helen (Kempkes) —
Port Stanley, Ont.
Melanie, Peter, Selena
Grace & John Pasma — Edmonton, Alta.
Rachel & Keith, Jeremy, Gregory, Timothy
Renee & Dick Saarloos — Aylmer, Ont.
Ben & Renee, Janelle, Valerie, David
Carla & John Oudyk — Brantford, Ont.
Chris, Nathaniel, Kendra
Home address: 15 Chant St., St. Thomas, ON N5R 4Y6

Obituary

Sybrandaburen, Fr. Chilliwack, B.C.
the Neth. Canada
January 4, 1921 - September 11, 2001
"But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57)
The Lord called home our dear wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother
HELEN YPMA (nee DOTINGA)
For 57 years we shared a rich life with her. She died in the loving arms of her family after a courageous battle with cancer.
She will be sadly missed by her husband Louie, seven children, 24 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.
Correspondence address: 304-46966 Yale Rd. E, Chilliwack, BC V2P 2S7

Obituary

WILLEM (BILL) BROER
Andijk, the Neth. Point Clarke, Ont.
March 27, 1947 - October 16, 2001
"Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." (Isaiah 64:8)
Bill was taken to the Lord suddenly, at his workplace, in his 55th year.
The family is comforted by the assurance that Bill knew his life was in God's hands.
Survived by his wife Etty and his children:
Roxanne & Ed Bowes — Ottawa, Ont.
Denny & Theresa Broer — Marshall, Sask.
Mark & Sabrena Broer — London, Ont.
Kevin Broer — at home
Stephanie Broer — Guelph, Ont.
Andy Broer — at home
Bill was the dearest Opa for Wilson & Liam Bowes; Angela, Olivia and Dakota Broer; Nathan Broer and Zachary; loving brother of Dick Broer of Alliston, Ont. and Edie Gritter of South Holland, Ill.
Funeral Service was held on October 19, 2001, at the Kincardine Pentecostal Church, Rev. E. Tenyenhuis officiating.
Donations may be made to World Vision, CRWRC, Heart & Stroke Foundation.
Correspondence address:
R.R. 1, Kincardine, ON N2Z 2X3;
Telephone 519-395-3581

Miscellaneous

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Classifieds

Obituaries

Laaghalerveen, Dr. Abbotsford, B.C.
the Neth. Canada
April 13, 1915 - October 7, 2001
1 Corinthians 15:57

On Sunday, October 7, after a short illness

ROBERT BRONSEMA

went home peacefully to be with his Lord and Saviour, at the age of 86.
Beloved husband for 63 years of Hilda Bronsema (Bergsma).
Predeceased by son Frank and son-in-law Andy Beerda.
Dear father and father-in-law of:
Ann Beerda
Clarence Bronsema
Jack & Judy Bronsema
Faye & Stan Marten
Bernita & Jack Boersma
Mary-Ann & Tony Maan
20 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.
Also survived by one brother and one sister in the Netherlands.
Correspondence address:
H. Bronsema, #259 Menno Hospital, 32945 Marshall Rd., Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 1K1

ELSJE (ALICE) MATTER

Paaslo, the Neth. Grimsby, Ont.
Sept. 29, 1911 - Oct.16, 2001

Two weeks after celebrating her 90th birthday the Lord took home in His wisdom our beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, Elsje Matter.
Predeceased by her husband Pieter, May 4 2001.
Loving Mother and Oma of:
Faye & Mike Tjoelker — Guelph, Ont.
George & Jennifer, *Aaron, Jenna, Stephen,* Paul, Sylvia, Conrad
Richard & Jennifer Matter — Woodstock, Ont.
Tom, Lisa & John Van Straaten, *Courtney, Emily,* Patricia & Peter Schepers, *Elaine,* Heather
Rose & Andrew Vanderlaan — Fergus, Ont.,
Ron & Janette, *Joel, Emily,* Cindy & Paul Nicolaou, Michelle & Craig Shoemaker, *Riley, Cole,* Peter & Sheila, *Levi, Alana,* Cathy, David
Luke & Hennie Matter — Burlington, Ont.
Peter, Elissa, Kyle, Emily
Bert & Teeny Matter — Guelph, Ont.
Janine, Gary, Sharleen

A memorial service was held on Friday Oct. 19, 2001, at First Christian Reformed Church, Guelph, Ont., Rev. Jack Van de Hoef and Rev. George Van Arragon conducting the service.

Psalm 62:5-8

Correspondence address:
Faye Tjoelker, 81 Dean Ave. Guelph ON N1G 1L3

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Social Work
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***Pending Institutional approval.**
Evaluation of applications will continue until the positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Avenue NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697

Facsimile: 712 722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

Bethel Christian Reformed Church, Listowel Ontario is seeking
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Listowel, ON N4W 3G8
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Those interested in receiving further information or a school and position profile may e-mail to **searchcom@fvchs.bc.ca** or may leave a message for Peter Van Ooyen through the school at 604-581-1033.

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15353 92nd Ave.
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www.fvchs.bc.ca

Event

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

The Hosanna Choir
Organ: Andre Knevel
Piano: Andrew Knevel
Violin: Stephanie Nuwman Scholman
COME AND SING ALONG
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2001. 8:00 P.M.

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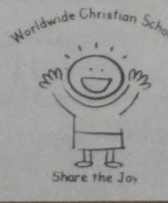
$25.00 per family

Event

You are cordially invited to attend the
COMMISSIONING SERVICE
of
Rev. John Postuma
as Director of Ministry Development for
Worldwide Christian Schools Canada
Sunday, November 25, 2001
10:00 a.m.
at the Maranatha Christian Reformed Church
33 King St., York, Ontario
Reception to follow



For Sale

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Dr. Rem Kooistra
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(NC)—Double the light from one holiday bulb by putting a reflector behind it. You will reduce energy consumption and that, in turn, means fewer emissions into the environment.

- News Canada

ENVIROfacts

(NC)—From Environment Canada
- Canadians are the second-highest users of water in their day-to-day lives.
- Municipal waste water discharges represent one of the largest sources of pollutant releases by volume into Canadian waters.
- Canada is steward of about 20 percent of the world's remaining natural areas, nine percent of the world's renewable fresh water and 25 percent of the world's wetlands.
- The most intense rainstorm ever to hit Canada occurred at Buffalo Gap, Saskatchewan, May 30, 1961 when 250 millimetres of rain fell in less than an hour.

- News Canada

Classifieds

Volunteers

YOUR INVITATION TO GUAM: Short and long term volunteer positions in accounting, teaching and skilled construction are available in Guam beginning January 2002. If you feel God's calling in any of these areas, please call your ServiceLink Office for an information package. In Canada, contact **Carol Sybenga at 1-800-730-3490** or **sybengac@crcna.org** and in the U.S., contact **Ruth Buntin at 1-800-552-7972** or **buntinr@crcna.org.**

GUAM WORK TEAMS: Can you sheetrock, frame (steel), insulate, paint or do plumbing? How would you like to spend 3 weeks in Guam using those skills to help in the building of Faith Church? All expenses for this opportunity, except air travel is provided for you. Interested? Then give your ServiceLink Office a call and sign up today! All individuals including couples, church groups, college students, from ages 18 and up are encouraged to apply. This opportunity will not last long. In Canada, contact **Carol Sybenga at 1-800-730-3490** or **sybengac@crcna.org** and in the U.S., contact **Ruth Buntin at 1-800-552-7972** or **buntinr@crcna.org.**

Job Opportunities

Community CRC of Frankford, Ont. is seeking an **ordained, full-time pastor** whose gifts include sound Biblical preaching, pastoral care and youth ministry. Our congregation of approx. 50 families is part of a small rural community, located on the Trent River. If interested, please contact:
Tina Hoftyzer, 536 Ninth Murray Rd., RR 1, Frankford, ON K0K 2C0, or call 613-398-6834; fax 613-398-1710

PASTOR NEEDED
Ebenezer Christian Reformed Church of Jarvis, Ont. is currently looking for a **part-time associate Pastor.** The successful Pastor must enjoy ministering to the elderly. Send inquiries to:
Mrs. Harmene Sytsma, R.R. 3, Hagersville, ON N0A 1H0

Jarvis Christian Reformed Church
is in need of a
CARETAKER
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Ebenezer CRC,
Attention: Mr. John Kloet Jr.
Box 239, Jarvis ON N0A 1J0
For more info, call John Kloet at: 519-587-4046.

Job Opportunities

Ottawa Christian School is accepting applications for the position of **PRINCIPAL.**
OCS is an interdenominational, JK to Grade 8 community of 230 students, and growing!
The candidate should have strong administrative skills and a willingness to work alongside the Board of Directors in vision-casting. Employment effective Aug. 1, 2002. Application deadline: Dec. 31, 2001. Interested candidates should submit a statement of faith and resume to:

Principal Search Committee
c/o Lee-Pierre Shirey
2191 Benjamin Ave.
Ottawa, ON K2A 1P6

Website at: www.ocschool.org
E-mail: info@ocschool.org
E-mail or Phone Mr. Shirey:
lpshirey@comnet.ca
819-682-7252

Miscellaneous

Arie Hoogerbrugge
Associate Broker
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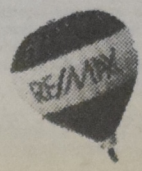

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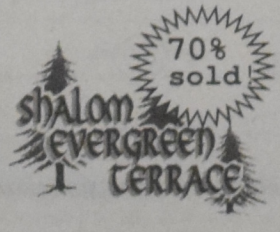

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The Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA) is seeking applicants for the full-time position of Education and Prevention Specialist with Pastors Church Relations division of the Denominational Office. Responsibilities include implementation of training and prevention programs for classes, ministry staff, councils and congregations in consultation with director of Pastor Church Relations.
A Master's degree and a minimum of five years experience in ministry or related field. Staff ministry experience preferred. Knowledge and understanding of how the Christian Reformed Church functions. Willingness to travel throughout the U.S. and Canada is required. Availability to work some evenings and weekends is required.
A detailed job description is available upon request. For consideration, submit a copy of your resume or letter of interest by **December 7, 2001.**

Director of Personnel
Christian Reformed Church in North America
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE
Grand Rapids MI 49560-0500
616-224-5881 / FAX 616-224-5896
E-mail: colemann@crcna.org

Duncan Christian School
Administrator (K-12)

Duncan Christian School is an established and growing school of approximately 300 students, located in the beautiful Cowichan Valley of Vancouver Island. Located approximately 50 kilometers from Victoria, Duncan is a beautiful and vibrant city serving as a business centre to approximately seventy-five thousand people who live in the area.
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Position commencing - September 2002
(Letters of enquiry are invited and will be treated confidentially-application requirements will be forwarded upon request)

Search Committee Chairperson
Duncan Christian School
495 Beech Avenue
Duncan, BC V9L 3J8
Phone: 250-748-5213 Fax: 250-746-3615
E-mail: mcroswel@island.net

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Calendar of Events

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is $7.50 per line, or $1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion.

Nov. 9	Concert **Clinton** CRC, 7:30 p.m. Laurens Kaldeway, organ; Blyth Fest. Orchestra; Ron Greidanus, piano; Men of Note. Call 519-482-5372
Nov. 9	Salem Chr. Mental Health Assoc. Annual Membership Dinner meeting 6:30 p.m. at Second CRC **Brampton**, 444 Steeles Rd. W, at McLaughlin Rd. S. Speaker: Diane Marshall on "Spirituality in Counselling". $15.pp., $25.per couple. RSVP by Nov. 5. For more info.: 905-528-0353
Nov. 10	The Lighthouse Christian Community Centre Annual International Dinner and Silent Auction, at Buffet King, 401 & Warden, **Scarborough**, Ont. Call the Lighthouse at 416-535-6262 for reservations.
Nov. 15	Art Exhibit Redeemer University College, **Ancaster,** 7 p.m. Free admission.
Nov. 23	Benefit Concert Durham Christian Homes, Hebron CRC, **Whitby**, Ont.
Nov. 23	Liberation Choir, **Orangeville,** Ont. 8 p.m. , Orangeville Can. Ref. Church, 55 C-Line.
Nov. 23	Music in the Valley presents: Pipes and Praise with Dr. John Vandertuin at St. Paul's United Church, 29 Park St., **Dundas**, Ont. at 8 p.m. Phone 905-628-6396. Tickets: Adults $15, Students $10, available from the church.
Nov. 24	Liberation Choir, **London,** Ont. 8 p.m., St. Paul's Cathedral, 472 Richmond St. Information for all Liberation Choir concerts: 905-457-2348
Nov. 24-25	**Stratford** CRC Celebrating 50 years of God's faithfulness. Info 519-393-6116; stratfpordcrc@quadro.net
Nov.27-Dec.1	Main Stage Play "Twelfth Night", Redeemer Univ. College, **Ancaster,** For info.: 905-648-2131, ext.4211
Nov. 29-30	2001 CFFO Annual Convention, Holliday Inn, **Cambridge,** Ont. Registr.: 519-837-1620; fax 519-824-1835
Dec. 7	Christmas Concert "Magnificat" **Redeemer** Concert Choir & Alumni Choir. Tickets $16. Stu/Sen. $14.
Dec. 8	Mountainview concert, **Grimsby.** André Knevel, organ, flute, Stephanie Scholman, violin, Hosanna Choir.
Dec. 15	Can. Chr. Education Foundation. Repeat performance **VISION TV** broadcasting. See ad in this issue.
April 21, 2002	**Calgary** 1st CRC 50th Anniv. Former members welcome. For info. 403-243-2244 celebr8fifty@aol.com

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CHRISTMAS ISSUE GREETINGS

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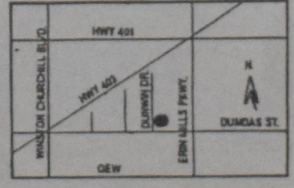

Mississauga, Dundas St. — 2 Blocks W. of Erin Mills Parkway (905) 828-9511

News

Christian agencies send relief to Afghan refugees

Alan Doerksen

WINNIPEG — As America and Canada take part in a military campaign against the Taliban, millions of Afghans are on the run, and many of them face starvation as the cold Afghan winter approaches. To meet the needs of Afghan refugees and displaced families, Christian agencies such as the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, Mennonite Central Committee, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and World Vision Canada are sending food and other aid to Afghanistan and bordering countries.

In late September, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB) called on the Canadian government to remember the humanitarian needs of Afghan people. "This is the third consecutive year of serious drought in Afghanistan," said Jim Cornelius, executive director of the Winnipeg-based aid agency, in a press release. "Without help, five million people are facing starvation. That's equivalent to the entire population of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba, combined!

"These are farmers, herders, widows and children. They are just ordinary citizens, who because of severe crop failures, have no food or resources to get through the coming winter," explained Cornelius. "The situation has been made even worse by ongoing civil conflict, deepening economic problems and recent political tensions."

Over the last three years, CFGB shipped 3,600 tonnes of Canadian wheat, beans, and canola oil into Afghanistan. This project was co-ordinated by Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCC), a member of CFGB, and was also supported by the Canadian International Development Agency. The managing and monitoring of the food is done through trusted non-governmental humanitarian organizations with staff in Afghanistan.

Fragile food pipeline

The threat of further military action "is quickly closing the fragile food pipeline into Afghanistan. Right now, we have another 600 tonnes of Canadian food stranded in a UN warehouse in northern Pakistan," said Cornelius.

"We are asking the Canadian government to remember the needs of ordinary Afghan people, who are facing potential famine this coming winter.... Issues like the safe transport of food aid and access by humanitarian agencies, must be taken into consideration."

Canadian Foodgrains Bank is a Christian-based charitable organization that facilitates the collection and distribution of grain and other agricultural commodities to the world's hungry in co-operation with its 13 member agencies, which include MCC and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC).

CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK PHOTOS (2)

A shepherd on the desolate landscape of Afghanistan.

An Afghan farmer. Because of severe crop failures, many Afghans have no food or resources to get through the coming winter, explains the Canadian Foodgrains Bank.

Border problems

MCC Canada and its American affiliate are planning to provide food for Afghan refugees through the Iranian Red Crescent Society, the equivalent of the Red Cross. The Red Crescent has planned to help some of the half million refugees now gathered in Herat, a city in western Afghanistan near the border of Iran, reports MCC. But unsure of whether workers will be able to enter Afghanistan, and anticipating an increased flow of refugees into Iran, the Red Crescent may instead help those refugees who have crossed into Iran.

Iran and Pakistan recently closed their borders to Afghans. However, large sections of the borders lie in remote areas, so some refugees are getting through, reports MCC. Thousands more are gathered at the closed border crossings.

In Afghanistan, people fleeing military strikes are massing in refugee camps already filled with more than 2.5 million people who have fled a four-year drought and more than 20 years of war, reports MCC. Since 1995, MCC has contributed $6.2 million (Cdn.) for aid in Afghanistan.

Willy Reimer, MCC's director of food disaster natural resources, reported in mid-October "we have 660 metric tonnes of food in Pakistan" waiting to be delivered to refugees. "The World Food Program does deliveries." MCC also works closely with CFGB with its relief efforts in the Middle East. Although Reimer concedes "it will be very difficult" to get some food aid to Afghans, "we need to continue to try."

MCC is also sending $755,000 worth of blankets and comforters to help Afghan refugees survive the approaching cold winter.

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) is also responding to the need in Afghanistan, reports communications associate Marcia Mantel. "CRWRC is working with MCC, which has taken the lead in this response."

In addition, says Mantel, "5000 metric tons of lentils from CFGB will feed Afghan refugees in Iran, and families displaced in Afghanistan. The Iranian Red Crescent Society ... will distribute these supplies." CRWRC is also collaborating with another agency to provide emergency shelter and food to displaced Afghans.

Aid workers ordered out

Brian Hatchell, communications and public relations officer with World Vision Canada (WVC), says "currently we are not operational in Afghanistan, but neither are many aid agencies, as all expatriate staff were ordered out of the country by the Taliban. We have three staff on the ground in neighboring countries, and more on the way, including myself. They are conducting assessments of the need....

"There are 3.5 million refugees in surrounding countries, but the main number of people in need are still within Afghanistan, since most neighboring countries have now closed their borders for fear of being inundated by refugees. So although the need is great now, it will be even greater when the borders open up. We are preparing for that to happen, and with our partners will distribute aid to those in most need."

WVC has committed more than $3 million to the aid effort in Central Asia. Currently, the agency is shipping $500,000 (Cdn) worth of goods to Afghan refugees for arrival in early November, including: 5,000 blankets, 1,000 cooking sets, 387 tents, and 1,000 plastic tarps.

News Digest

Art imitates life

LONDON, England — An installation that the popular and pricey British artist Damien Hirst assembled in the window of a Mayfair gallery in London recently, was dismantled and discarded the same night by a cleaning man who said he thought it was garbage, reports Warren Hoge.

The work — a collection of half-full coffee cups, ashtrays with cigarette butts, empty beer bottles, a paint-smeared palette, an easel, a ladder, paintbrushes, candy wrappers and newspaper pages strewn about the floor — was the centrepiece of an exhibition at the Eyestorm Gallery. Heidi Reitmaier, head of special projects for the gallery, put its sales value at hundreds of thousands of dollars. The gallery owners retrieved as much of it as they could and, working from photographs made the day before, put it back together.

Far from being upset by the mix-up, Mr. Hirst greeted the news as "hysterically funny."

Gator wrestling

BRIDGEPORT, Penn. (AP) — It took a round of gator wrestling for a 10-year-old boy to prove that an alligator had found a home in a neighborhood creek.

Sam Tharp told his family that he saw an alligator in a nearby creek. But they didn't believe him. "They kept teasing me, telling me they thought I was drinking creek water," Sam said. "I had to make them eat their words."

Sam got close enough to grab the 24-inch-long alligator as it was trying to free itself from weeds on the creek bank. After a brief struggle, Sam got control of the reptile and took it home.

Flying donuts

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico (*Albuquerque Journal*) — Albuquerque police have taken donut runs to new heights, swooping down in an official helicopter for a late-night snack.

"I don't know how they decided that was a good idea," said Lt. Bob Huntsman, department spokesman. Huntsman said the department is investigating. "If they violated policy or procedure, they're going to get disciplined for it," he said.

A witness saw the helicopter land in a dirt field near a Krispy Kreme donut shop. As the helicopter idled, someone got out and went into the store, returning 10 or 15 minutes later with a Krispy Kreme box.